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THE

WORKS

OF THE

Long-Mournful and Sorely-Diſtreſſed

ISAAC PENINGTON,

WHOM

The LORD, in his tender Mercy, at length viſited and relieved by the Miniſtry of that deſpiſed People called

QUAKERS;

AND IN THE

SPRINGINGS of that LIGHT, LIFE, and HOLY POWER in him, which they had truly and faithfully teſtified of, and directed his Mind to, were theſe Things written;

AND

Are now publiſhed as a thankful Teſtimony of the Goodneſs of the LORD unto him, and for the Benefit of others.

"They alſo that erred in Spirit, ſhall know Underſtanding; and they that "murmured, ſhall learn Doctrine." Iſai. xxix. 24.

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THE

THE TESTIMONY OF GEORGE FOX, CONCERNING ISAAC PENINGTON.

CONCERNING our dear friend and brother Iſaac Penington, who is lately deceaſed, and whom the Lord hath lately taken away from among his people, and from his wife and children; he was a ſerviceable miniſter of the goſpel of ſalvation, and of the word of life, which did ſpring through him often, to the refreſhing and comforting of the church of Chriſt, and to his own comfort, and to the praiſe and glory of the Lord God. Amen.

And now all muſt be content with and in the will of the Lord God, who giveth and taketh at his own pleaſure; who hath all breath and life, and the length of days in his hand. And ſo he is well in the Lord; bleſſed be the name of the Lord, who is over all for ever. For, as John ſaith; 'Bleſſed are the dead 'which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, ſaith 'the ſpirit, that they may reſt from their labours; 'and their works do follow them.'

You may ſee what a cloud of witneſſes the apoſtle ſpeaketh of, which died in the faith, and obtained a good report; which holy and divine faith is the victory. In this faith they pleaſed God; and by this

faith, the gift of God, they had acceſs to God, and ſo died in the Lord, and have his bleſſing from him, the fountain then and now. And ſo all true Chriſtians are to live, that Chriſt may be 'magnified in their 'bodies, whether it be by life or death,' as the apoſtle ſaith, Phil. i. 20. And the ſame apoſtle ſaith to the ſaints; 'None of us liveth to himſelf, and no 'man dieth to himſelf; for whether we live, we live 'unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto 'the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we 'are the Lord's. Rom. xiv. 7, 8. And Chriſt ſaith, 'Whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never 'die. Believeſt thou this?' John xi. 26. For they are grafted into Chriſt by believing in his light, which is the life in him.

The memorial of the juſt is bleſſed: 'Even the 'Lord God of hoſts, the Lord is his memorial.' Hoſ. xii. 5. 'But the name of the wicked ſhall rot.' Prov. x. 7. 'and his memory ſhall be cut off from the earth.' Pſal. cix. 15. So ye may ſee the memorial of the juſt is recorded by the juſt in holy ſcriptures of truth. But my deſire is, that all may ſee their names written in the Lamb's book of life, before the foundation of the world, and rejoice in that; 'and praiſe God that 'their life is hid with Chriſt in God.' Col. iii. 3.

'Precious in the ſight of the Lord is the death of 'his ſaints.' Pſal. cxvi. 15. Therefore live the holy and righteous life, that ye may die the death of the righteous.

It is now above twenty years ſince Iſaac Penington came among God's people: and ſince that time he hath gone through many exerciſes, and trials, and temptations, and ſnares; both by them that were without, and falſe brethren; beſides all his ſufferings, and cruel and tedious impriſonments, and perſecutions, for the name and life of Chriſt Jeſus, and true Chriſtianity; which in the end, ſome years before his death, the Lord, in and with his power, ſet him free from; and gave him dominion over all, and eſtabliſhed him upon his living rock and foundation, to praiſe his holy

holy name in his church, and among his ſaints and people, in the Lord's freſh living power and ſpirit. And he did freely miniſter of his living bread and water, which he had received from above, from the living God and his Son, to the comfort of them that feared the Lord, and keep their habitation in the truth, in meekneſs, and in humility.

I do know that he is well in the Lord, and in peace with him through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Such as are puffed up, and do ſwell in their notions, may rejoice and be glad that he is taken out of their way; and they may think they will have the more liberty; becauſe that he, being a living ſtone, and member of the living head, had no fellowſhip nor unity with ſuch as were full of high ſwelling words, without the life of Chriſt, the heavenly and ſpiritual man; but did reprove ſuch, and admoniſh them: but ſuch their gladneſs and joy will be turned into bitterneſs, and ſorrow and mourning in the end. Therefore, let all ſuch take heed and be warned, leſt the hand of the Lord do ſuddenly turn againſt them. For I could deſire, that all were in that innocent life that he departed out of this world in: and I know that he died in the Lord, and is bleſſed. So let his works follow him, who is well, and at his reſt with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the reſt of all his faithful people. To him be glory and honour, thanks and praiſe, now and for ever. Amen.

THE TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM PENN, CONCERNING ISAAC PENINGTON.

AS the memory of the juſt is bleſſed, ſo to me there ſeems a bleſſing upon thoſe that have a right remembrance of them: wherefore, to the memory of this juſt man, my dear friend and relation, Iſaac Penington, I do, with a ſincere and religious affection, dedicate this enſuing teſtimony.

And firſt, give me leave to ſay ſomething of his manly capacity: the beſt comes after.

He was well deſcended as to his worldly parentage, and born heir to a fair inheritance; his education was ſuitable to his quality among men, having all the advantages the ſchools and univerſities of his own country could give him, joined with the converſation of ſome of the knowingeſt and conſiderableſt men of his own time. But his natural abilities, the gifts of his Creator, they excelled: he was a man quick in apprehenſion, fruitful in conception, and of a lively wit and intelligence, all adorned with an extraordinary mildneſs; that as other men are want to ſhew their pregnancy by ſharpneſs, he manifeſted his with an engaging ſweetneſs.

His

His father's ſtation in publick buſineſs gave him pretence enough to ſhare of the world's greatneſs; but, which brings me to his better and religious capacity, he, with bleſſed meek Moſes, refuſed the Egyptian glory of the world, and choſe rather a life dedicated to an inquiry after God, and holy fellowſhip with him and his deſpiſed Iſrael.

Very early did the Lord viſit him with a more than ordinary manifeſtation of his love; and it had that good effect upon him, that it kept him both from the evils and vain worſhips of the world; and he became the wonder of his kindred and familiars for his awful life, and ſerious and frequent retirements, declining all company that might interrupt his meditations; and by giving himſelf over to a life of mourning and pilgrimage, he was as unpleaſant to them, as the world was to him. Nor did this ſorrow flow from a ſenſe of former vice; for he was virtuous from his childhood; but, with holy Habakkuk, from the dread he had of the majeſty of God, and his deſire to find a reſting-place in the great day of trouble. Nothing in theſe exerciſes gave him eaſe or comfort, but the ſmiles of God's countenance upon his ſoul; and that it was he thirſted after with a perpetual ſolicitation; firſt, How ſhall I appear? and then, O that I may appear before God!

His inward exerciſes and enjoyments being of a very peculiar nature, made him take little comfort in any of the religious ſocieties then known to him. He was as one alone; for he ſaw ſo much of that uncircumciſed and uncrucified fleſh (which is as graſs) profeſs the myſteries of the heavenly kingdom; I mean people but under ordinary convictions, that had never known Jacob's troubles, nor the fear and trembling with which the true ſalvation is wrought; and that the ſpirit and abilities of man took up ſo great a part and ſhare in religious duties among them, and the ſpirit of the Lord ſo little, if any at all; that he felt them of little or no uſe to him. On the contrary,

he was often burthened with them, and preſſed in ſpirit to lay open their carnal ſtate under a Chriſtian profeſſion; and though they held the notions of the truth, it was not in the precious and experimental ſenſe of the holy virtue and life of the truth; inſomuch that he found it his duty to endeavour to break their falſe peace, and bewilder their lofty wiſdom and profeſſion; rather approving of a ſtate of humble doubting, than hypocritical confidence; and that waiting for the Lord's coming in ſpirit, without ſin, to the ſalvation of the ſoul, that people may truly know the Lord and his work, and from thence ſpeak forth his praiſe to others, than profeſs the enjoyments of other ſaints, that had been obtained through great tribulations, when they had never known any ſuch thing in themſelves, and ſo had no true ſenſe of God's inward work, nor the true ſacrifice of God's preparing to offer to him, which only is accepted with him.

This drew reproach upon him, as a man ſingular and cenſorious, from the worldly profeſſors; particularly the clergy (that common eclipſe between God and the ſouls of people); yet thoſe that with him waited for the conſolation of Iſrael, and the coming of the Son of man in power and great glory, they found him out, valued and honoured him, and ſweet was their fellowſhip to him; who boaſted in nothing more than that they had nothing to boaſt of, whilſt the Laodicea of their age thought ſhe wanted nothing: and in that emptineſs they waited to be filled of him that filleth all things at his coming and kingdom, that they might be the witneſſes of his reſurrection and appearance. Some of them died before that bleſſed time came; ſome ſaw it, and were glad, and with good old Simeon departed in peace: and others lived to ſee the glory of that bleſſed day both dawn and break forth upon them, to their admiration and comfort; among whom my dear father-in-law, Iſaac Penington, was not the laſt, nor leaſt of note.

About

About the year 1657, it pleaſed the Lord to ſend him a Peter to declare to him, that the time of the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit, and breaking forth of the heavenly work of God in the ſouls of men and women was come; and many Aquilas and Priſcillas came after, who inſtructed him in the way of God more perfectly. And however he was advanced above many in his knowledge of ſcripture, and had formerly received many heavenly openings of truth's myſteries in the ſoul; yet did the Lord's way of appearance diſappoint his expectation; and when the light broke forth in his heart, which his ſincerity longed for, he found a great mixture, and that he had much to loſe and part with, before he came to be that bleſſed little child (that new and heavenly birth) which inherits the kingdom of God; which made him cry, 'Narrow is the way, and ſtrait is the gate indeed that 'leads to life.'

But to the glory of the living God, and praiſe of this juſt man's memory, let me ſay, neither his worldly ſtation, the moſt conſiderable of any that had cloſed with this way, nor the contradictions it gave to any former conceptions, nor the debaſement it brought upon his learning and wiſdom, nor yet that reproach and loſs that attended his publick eſpouſing of it, did deter him from owning, and cordially embracing of it; but with an humble and broken ſpirit he fell before this holy appearance of Jeſus, that true light of men, whoſe power and life he felt revealed in him, to the ſaving of his ſoul; and boldly owned and confeſſed this ſpiritual coming of the great Meſſiah, that was able to teach him all things: to his name his knee truly bowed, and the ſcripture was in him fulfilled; with Nathaniel he cried, 'Thou art the Son 'of God! thou art the king of Iſrael!' Now he ſaw clearly between the precious and the vile in himſelf, between that which was truly of God, and that which was merely of man, in his former exerciſes; and he was not ſtiff nor ſtout in defence of his own building,

and former conceivings: no; but ſold all for the pearl, and became willingly a poor man in ſpirit, that ſo he might enter into the kingdom of God. Thus parting with all he had not received of God, he received a new ſtock from heaven, wherein God proſpered him; the dew of heaven reſted upon his branch and root, and he grew rich and fruitful in all heavenly treaſure; 'full of love, faith, mercy, patience, and 'long-ſuffering; diligent in the work of the Lord, 'and exemplary in his duty to God and men.' Inſomuch, that I may ſay he was one of a thouſand; *zealous, yet tender; wiſe, yet humble: a conſtant and early comer to meetings, and watchful and reverent in them: one that ever loved power and life more than words; and as for that he waited, ſo would he be often deeply affected with it, and made to utter ſuch teſtimonies as were greatly to the help of the poor and the needy, the weary and heavy-laden, the true ſojourners and travellers to the eternal reſt and city of God.* To this his writings as well as miniſtry tended, as his enſuing worthy labours will abundantly witneſs; wherein it will be eaſy for the reader to obſerve his peculiar and mighty love to the great profeſſors of religion in theſe kingdoms, whom carnal apprehenſions, or unjuſt prejudices, have hindered from cloſing with the bleſſed truth, as it is known and felt amongſt us; and his fervent labour to remove thoſe obſtructions, with ſuch tenderneſs, yet great clearneſs, that I may venture to ſtyle him their apoſtle: for as in almoſt every meeting, ſo in every book, the bent of his ſpirit was towards them, that thoſe who made a more than ordinary profeſſion of God, not without ſome ancient touches of the divine grace, and experience of God's viſitation (though much extinguiſhed with human and worldly mixtures) might come to know what that was they once taſted of, how they loſt it, and which is the way to recover the living and full enjoyment of it, even the inward knockings and appearance of Jeſus the Saviour, to the

the ſalvation of their ſouls: and I pray God they may anſwer his love (for he was much ſpent on their account); that ſo his miniſtry, writings, travels, and tears may not be matter of charge and evidence againſt them in the day of their judgment.

As his outward man grew in age, his inward man grew in grace, and the knowledge of our dear Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; for the excellency of which, he had juſtly counted all things elſe but as droſs and dung: for it was obſervable among them that rightly knew him in his declining time, when the candle of his natural life burnt dimmer, his ſoul waxed ſtronger, and, like a repleniſhed lamp, ſhined with greater luſtre; and truly he had a double portion of the ſpirit upon him, and was anointed with judgment and zeal for the Lord, which appeared in two eminent reſpects.

Firſt, that he was very urgent that all thoſe who knew any thing of the heavenly gift of miniſtry unto others, would always wait in their ſeveral exerciſes to be endued with matter and power from on high, before they opened their mouths in a teſtimony for the Lord; and that at all times, as well out of meetings as in them, they might live ſo near the Lord, as to feel the key of David opening the myſteries of the heavenly kingdom, and by experiencing the depth of the heavenly travail, and the trials, deliverances, and conſolations of it, with that dominion and victory that in the end, by perſeverance, are obtained, they might be as true ſaviours on Mount Zion, the ſalt and lights of the world, thoroughly furniſhed to every good word and work, and maſter-builders in God's houſe; that "a pure and living ſtream of miniſtry might be continued and conveyed to the generations to come; that they might not only hear, but taſte of what we have known of the word and work of life and redemption in our age." Herein he was very careful.

But his excellency in the ſecond reſpect, was his fervent love to the heavenly union of brethren; and whatever

whatever ſtruck at that, though under ever ſuch ſpecious pretences, he no ſooner perceived it, and the ſubtil but miſchievous workings of it, than with deep wiſdom he detected, and with his whole might encountered and oppoſed it.

And though by nature he was ſuffering to a degree of letting his mercy to others almoſt wound his own ſoul, yet ſo deeply did his love to the Lord and his people, and to that comely order God had ſettled them in, engage his ſoul, that he was as bold as a lion, yea, as warlike as a champion, againſt that ſpirit that went up and down to ſow jealouſies, to ſmite and reflect upon the holy care of the brethren, carnally interpreting their tender love and great pains, as if what was done by them were not intended to the edification of the body, but exaltation of ſome particular perſons over it. This ingratitude and injuſtice his ſoul abhorred, and often mourned for ſuch as were ſo ſeduced; as if it were the deſign of thoſe that had from the beginning laid out themſelves in the ſervice of God and his people, to bring them at laſt to a blind and unwarrantable ſubjection, that they might the better exerciſe dominion over them. This evil eye he helped to put out; and, in his oppoſition to this wandering and deſtroying ſpirit, that leads out of the love and unity of brethren, he approved himſelf a valiant of Iſrael, a Phineas for the God of his ſalvation; and the rewards of heaven were poured into his boſom; for his holy miniſtry manifeſtly increaſed in life and power, and his peace flowed as a river, and many were the witneſſes of his enlargements. Let thoſe that have loſt their firſt love, and are gone from their antient habitation, 'rage, 'and imagine vain things,' if they will: ſurely the travails and teſtimonies of this bleſſed man will be a witneſs againſt them that will not eaſily be ſilenced, and a burthen upon their backs that will not be eaſily taken off. But becauſe he deſired not their

their deſtruction, but prayed earneſtly to the laſt for their return, let not me, whilſt I am writing of his character, fall ſhort of his compaſſions; no, I pray God alſo with my whole ſpirit that they may repent, be contrite in heart, and faithfully return; at which, if the angels in heaven, certainly the ſpirits of the juſt that dwell in heavenly places, will abundantly rejoice too.

Theſe two cares were chiefly and almoſt continually before him. Thus he drew near to the grave, and I now draw to an end; but becauſe this ſervice is never to be done again, let me ſay, that as he was a light in the church, ſo he was a bleſſing to his own family: "*A moſt chaſte and loving* "*huſband, a very tender and prudent father, and a* "*juſt and kind maſter.*" I will add, "*and a good* "*neighbour, and a moſt ſecret and firm friend;*" of all unapt to believe ill, but never to report it, much leſs to do it to any: a man that ruled his tongue, ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak: but, when he did ſpeak, he was ſerious, yet ſweet, and not unchearful. What ſhall I ſay, but that great and many were the gifts God honoured him with, and with them he truly honoured his profeſſion. Being thus fit to live, he was prepared to die, and had nothing elſe to do when that ſummons was ſerved upon him, which was in the ſixty-third year of his age; at what time it pleaſed the Lord he fell very ſick, under a ſharp and painful diſtemper, which haſtened his diſſolution: however, the anguiſh of that bitter exerciſe could give no ſhake to internal peace, ſo well eſtabliſhed before it came; but he died, as he lived, in the faith that overcomes the world; whoſe ſoul being now releaſed from the confinements of time and frailties of mortality, is aſcended into the glorious freedom and undiſturbed joys of the juſt, where, with his holy brethren the patriarchs, prophets, apoſtles, and martyrs of Jeſus, he for ever bleſſeth and praiſeth the God and Father

ther of the righteous generations by Jesus Christ, God's Lamb, and our heavenly Redeemer; to whom with the Father be all honour, glory, might, majesty and dominion, through all the ages of his church, and for ever. Amen.

WILLIAM PENN.

Westminster, the 12th of the 12th month, 1680-81.

THE

THE

TESTIMONY

OF

GEORGE WHITEHEAD,

CONCERNING

ISAAC PENINGTON.

Precious in the ſight of the Lord is the death of his Saints.
PSAL. cxvi. 15.

THAT the Lord God, who is the Father of mercies, is truly good unto all that wait for him, and diligently ſeek after him, hath been ſignally manifeſted and experienced in our days, as in former ages; and that he fails not to anſwer the deſire and travail of that ſoul that hath ſincerity towards him, however it be for a time clouded and bewildered under various profeſſions and notions: ſincerity and honeſty of heart in inquiring after the knowledge of truth, ſhall not be diſappointed, nor miſs of its bleſſed end. I hope I ſhall not need to write an apology for this man's many writings; but let the ſincere meaning and honeſt intent thereof, and the lines of true ſenſe and good-will therein, ſpeak forth the Chriſtian mind and ſpirit of the author. Nor is it altogether proper for me to apologize in ſuch a caſe, having not read all theſe his books and writings now to be expoſed to publick view, though ſome of them I have at times formerly converſed with, as opportunities have admitted: which,

which, as I have perceived the teſtimonies and inſtructions thereof to be both ſavoury and experimental, ſo I charitably believe and hope of the reſt. But in this I can be more general and abſolute concerning the perſon; that he was a man that ſincerely ſought after the knowledge of the Lord God and his holy truth; and that accordingly the Lord did vouchſafe graciouſly to anſwer the ſincere deſires of his ſoul in due time, to the ſettling of his mind, and ſtaying his ſoul in a ſecret ſenſe and feeling of his living truth, power, and ſpirit, to his confirmation in that moſt precious and living faith, which was once delivered unto the ſaints in light: and as God opened his heart to the tender reception of his holy truth and goſpel of peace, and embracing the faithful meſſengers thereof; ſo he wrought both immediately by his ſpirit, and inſtrumentally by his meſſengers, for his confirmation in that light and grace, from whence he had often before received many true diſcoveries, ſights, and openings; having alſo often heard the ſound of that divine breath, or ſpirit of life, which moved in his heart, before the immortal birth thereof was brought to light, or the man-child (for which his ſoul travailed) was brought forth into the world. He was not willing to obſcure his divine diſcoveries, nor to put his candle under a buſhel, nor hide his talent in the earth; but was induſtrious on the Lord's behalf, in telling and ſhewing to the ſons of men what diſcoveries he had made to him of the way of life and ſalvation from one degree to another. His inward exerciſe of mind and attention upon our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in his light, was ſerious, and his converſation innocent; for he knew the preſence and bleſſings of God were only to be enjoyed in ſuch a condition. The remembrance of his zeal for the holy truth in the improvement of his gift is never to be extinguiſhed, nor the record of his integrity and faithfulneſs ever to be obliterated: his tenderneſs and compaſſion towards the miſled captives was ſuch, that he was not wanting in his induſtrious endeavours for their deliverance out of their

their darkneſs, and ſpiritual blindneſs of thraldom. He earneſtly laboured with the barren profeſſors under various notions, and the fleſhly Chriſtians of our times, to invite them to the true light, life, and ſpirit of Chriſtianity, that they might not ſtick in their empty forms, and literal profeſſions, ſhort of the power of godlineſs. For his eye was to the principle of life, the true ſeed wherein the bleſſing is, and to the ſpiritual immortal birth, that breathes to God, and receives life, nouriſhment, and ſtrength from him, and lives to him, as knowing that the fleſhly birth muſt not inherit the promiſe, nor the ſon of the bond-woman be heir with the ſon of the free. He truly eſteemed of the holy ſcriptures, and ſeriouſly and frequently converſed with them: his eye being to that divine light and ſpirit of Chriſt Jeſus, which opens them, and gives the true underſtanding and experience of them; for he preferred the true and ſpiritual knowledge of the holy ſcriptures before all literal knowledge and underſtanding, exalting the ſpirit above the letter, the power above the form, the ſubſtance above the ſhadow; as knowing that the holy ſpirit and power were the foundation and cauſe of ſcriptures, and form of godlineſs. His patience and innocency have been well known, even towards ſuch contentious and prejudicate profeſſors, as evilly requited his labours of love (for their good) by perverſely expoſing him in print: but he well knew that truth and innocence would out-live all envy and evil-mindedneſs. It was given to him not only to believe, but alſo patiently to ſuffer for the name of Chriſt; he patiently ſuffered by reproaches, contradictions of evil men, perſecutions and impriſonments. I cannot forget the ſweet communion and ſociety in the truth which we have often had together, eſpecially of latter years; being fully ſatisfied, that it was a real earneſt of that glorious communion we ſhall eternally enjoy together in reſt and glory, where the precious and ſincere ſoul is entered with the Lord and all his ſaints and angels, and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect,

fect, who are written in heaven, having obtained a part in Chriſt Jeſus, the reſurrection and the life, where the ſecond death hath no power. And to this glorious end and reſt from our labours, others of us yet ſurviving are travelling and haſtening; glory and triumph for ever!

Now, ſerious reader, in love to the truth and thy ſoul, I would leave this caution with thee in relation to the books and writings of this our deceaſed friend and brother, that if thou meeteſt with any thing therein which thou doſt not underſtand, cenſure it not; be not prejudicate in any caſe, but wait till the Lord come, who reveals ſecrets, and unfolds myſteries. And if any thing (eſpecially of what was early written, as in a time of infancy) ſeems doubtful, or not ſo clear to thy underſtanding, let it have ſuch charitable conſtruction as becomes a Chriſtian ſpirit towards an induſtrious, honeſt-hearted, and well-meaning ſervant of Chriſt in his life-time, who was and is ever bleſſed of the Lord, and now gone to his reſt from his labours; the general tenor and import whereof clearly evinces his pious endeavours for the good of the children of men, and proclaims his Chriſtian deſign and induſtry to promote truth and righteouſneſs in the earth, pure religion, and Chriſtianity in ſpirit and life among men. The Lord of the harveſt ſend forth more fruitful labourers into his harveſt and vineyard! for the harveſt is great.

G. W.

London, the 28th of the
6th Month, 1680.

THE

THE

TESTIMONY

OF

SAMUEL JENNINGS,

CONCERNING

That faithful Servant of the LORD, and our dear Friend,

ISAAC PENINGTON,

Whom God hath lately removed from us, and fixed in his Eternal Reſt.

STRONG and powerful is that excellent arm of the Lord, which hath been revealed and made bare in this our day; and very effectual hath been the operation of it for the gathering of many into a nearneſs to the Lord, and leavening of them into the nature of its own purity; amongſt whom God hath numbered this our dear friend, and dignified him with that honour. And ſince God hath impreſſed upon our ſouls ſuch a ſenſe of him, I could not be clear, in reſpect of my duty to God, and love to him, to ſhut it up only in my own boſom, without giving this publick teſtimony of him. Although I know I can add nothing to him, as to his immediate enjoyment, yet let it be as an evidence of the eſteem I had of him when with us, and of his memorial now removed from us,

which God will perpetuate among the righteous, when the name of the wicked ſhall rot.

As to the innocency of his converſation in general (which is the moſt evident token of the indwellings of truth and ſincerity) I have this to ſay upon my own obſervation of it, I know none that did exceed him; for in that God made him an adorning to the doctrine of the goſpel. To mention particularly thoſe divine gifts wherewith he was eminently endued, would be too large; yet I cannot wholly omit them; wherefore I ſhall firſt mention that which had the firſt and chiefeſt place with him; namely, his deep travail, labour, care, and deſires for the proſperity of that weighty and bleſſed work, which God is carrying on in the earth; to wit, the gathering of loſt man to himſelf, and bringing him to know ſalvation in him; in which labour God bleſſed him with ſucceſs, and gave him the tongue of the learned to ſpeak a word in due ſeaſon, fitly comparable to apples of gold in pictures of ſilver; and by the force of this word he reached to many, to the turning of them from the evil of their ways; which remains as a crown upon him, and ſhall cauſe him to ſhine as a bright fixed ſtar in the firmament of God for ever. And how many living witneſſes are left behind, of the uſe and ſervice that God made him to be of to them, who are deeply affected with the ſenſe of their loſs in him, yet dare not complain, becauſe the Lord hath done it! O how hath my ſoul, with many others, been conſolated with him, in the communion we have had together with God, when the Lord hath opened his mouth in wiſdom, and cauſed his doctrine to drop as the rain, and his ſpeech to diſtill as dew on the tender plants!

O my dear brother! (or rather to many of us waſt thou, in God, a father) my ſoul is often pained, in the ſenſe of thy abſence, for our ſakes: yet greatly comforted and ſatisfied in God for thy ſake: for our loſs (though great) doth not equal thy gain. O how often haſt thou been opened, and thy ſpirit ſweetened, and in that ſweetneſs drawn forth to miniſter to thoſe

thoſe that were Iſraelites indeed, when thy words were ſofter than oil, ſweeter than honey, and more refreſhing than the pureſt wine; but to the wicked and deceitful as penetrating arrows. And although it were ſo contrary to his nature to touch with ſtrife (being of ſo meek a ſpirit), yet God, that guides the meek in judgment, did ſometimes concern him in a dreadful, yet true teſtimony againſt all that would divide in Jacob, and ſcatter in Iſrael. Yet how intire was his love to all thoſe who had a right value of, and abode in, the unity of the pure truth, againſt all the contemners and invaders of it! how affectionately and reverently have I heard him ſpeak of thoſe, who were the meſſengers of glad tidings to us, and publiſhers of that peace which he is now in the certain poſſeſſion of, as the reward and end of the juſt and upright! but eſpecially great was his regard to, and eſteem of, thoſe who have faithfully borne the heat and burthen of the day; whoſe arrows the Lord directed to the wounding of the man of ſin, and who yet remain as a bow that abides in its ſtrength, and wax yet ſtronger and ſtronger: thoſe he did account (as indeed they are) worthy of double honour. And although, through the infirmity of his nature, and weakneſs of his conſtitution, he was made unfit for much hard and publick travel; yet his conſtant practice did declare he had a vigorous and active mind, truly bowed to the ſervice of truth, as may appear by the many private and ſeaſonable viſits he made by writing, unto thoſe whom he had no other opportunity of being helpful to; and much ſervice he had of this kind, beyond what many were ſenſible of. Many young, and tender, and diſtreſſed ones will lament their loſs in him, who was ſo eaſily touched with a feeling of their exerciſe, from the ſenſe and remembrance he had of his own; and was very ready, and alſo fit, to contribute ſomething to their relief: for as he was once a man of ſorrows, and well acquainted with grief, ſo this benefit did he reap by it, to learn experience by the things he ſuf-

fered; and all the tribulation he met with did but make way for the ſuperabounding of his conſolation through Chriſt.

What he was in his family, and eſpecially to his dear and tender relations (whom he left weeping behind him, though not without hope) I ſhall not need to ſay much of; knowing they themſelves cannot be without a larger teſtimony than mine concerning the matter: only this I ſhall ſay, I would to God there were more ſo fit for our example in each relation.

Having thus far ſincerely diſcharged my duty, in giving this teſtimony, I am willing to confine myſelf to as much brevity as I can; though much more might be truly ſaid of him, and it is hard to ſay ſo little. Yet, for further ſatisfaction to any concerning him, that are deſirous of it, I refer them to his writings, now publiſhed together for common benefit: only let me give the reader this advice, that as God gave him wiſdom to divide his word aright, ſo do thou read it in the ſame wiſdom to receive it aright; for in that only canſt thou take a right meaſure of him, or have true fellowſhip with him. I have only this to add, as a caution to all, that as truth hath many enemies, ſo this our dear friend, for truth's ſake, hath ſome alſo; concerning whom I have a feeling, that they will be ready to grudge and take offence at this our innocent and juſtifiable practice, to preſerve the remembrance of the faithfulneſs of thoſe who have faithfully finiſhed their courſe, and, through the power of Chriſt, have had victory over the laſt enemy. There can be no other ground for this, but envy or ignorance; and therefore, to prevent ſo ill an effect (let it ſpring from whom it will) let ſuch know, that it was once not only allowed, but commanded of God, to write the dead bleſſed that die in the Lord, as well as to eſteem them ſo. And ſince it is undeniably the mind of God 'that the juſt ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance;' what can be more effectual to it, than by our written teſtimony to commend their memorial

memorial to our poſterity, that they may glorify the God of their fathers, and, after their example, walk in his way; in which the Lord, who gathered us into it, preſerve us to the time of our death, that, with the worthies of the Lord that are gone before us, we may receive the crown of life.

SAMUEL JENNINGS.

THE TESTIMONY OF AMBROSE RIGGE, Of the LIFE and DEATH of ISAAC PENINGTON.

THE Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and the fountain of love and life is open in my ſoul, and freely floweth towards all my dear brethren and fellow-labourers in the great harveſt of our Lord and Maſter, who are yet in the body; and the renewed remembrance of them whoſe earthly tabernacles are diſſolved, and have put on immortality, is often with me in endeared love; in which at this time I behold dear Iſaac Penington, in laſting union with us, though abſent in body; whoſe work and labour of love in his day is not forgotten of God, nor his people. He was brought to the true fold in an early hour of the goſpel day, as it broke forth in our times, and a reſt was prepared for him in a weary land; and the Lord heard the cry of his ſoul in the deep, and prepared a deliverer for him, out of the great ſea of waves, troubles, and uncertainties; and he came to the rock with joy when he ſaw him, and he built upon him, and was eſtabliſhed and fortified againſt every ſtorm and tempeſt of the boiſterous ſeas, which lifted up themſelves againſt him; and they were not a few, nor of ſmall conſe-

conſequence: his trials were great, both inward and outward, in which he quitted himſelf as a valiant champion in the Lamb's war. The Lord was with him, and delivered him out of all his troubles, and filled his cup, and often cauſed it to overflow, to the refreſhment of many; and freely he dealt his bread to the hungry, and his cup he handed to the thirſty: many widows and fatherleſs were relieved by him; his life flowing forth as a fountain moſt clear, both to the freed and impriſoned ſeed: a man of a contrite and humble ſpirit, in the innocency of a little child, by which he had entrance into the kingdom of immortality; where he now reſteth, out of the reach of the oppreſſor. He was a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with griefs; his life was a pilgrimatory paſſage to eternity. Who can ſay he oppreſſed them, or was chargeable to them; though part of his outward ſubſtance he loſt for the truth's teſtimony? He was a man filled with the power and ſpirit of the Lord; who, both in word, writing, and converſation, gave teſtimony to the world that he ſought a city whoſe builder and maker was God. He was a faithful witneſs for the ſaving truth, againſt all bad ſpirits and unſound members, unmeet for that body which God hath now prepared to do his will: and his manuſcripts left behind proclaim him a witneſs againſt all falſe hirelings, and their unrighteous practices and deceitful doctrines, whereby the earth both is, and hath for ages been corrupted; and the minds of young and old filled with unſound principles and beliefs in the weighty things relating to another world; and give a true and laſting teſtimony to the ſtrait and narrow path of life and righteouſneſs. He was endowed with wiſdom to diſcover the living child's mother, and give her the poſſeſſion; for the ſpirit of a diſcerning and of a ſound mind was in him, and the ſecrets of the Lord were upon his tabernacle. His upright Chriſtian ſpirit rendered him lovely to the upright, and formidable to the wicked. My heart is full of tender love to his life, who died in the Lord, and his works follow him; and

therefore doth my ſoul believe him bleſſed with the righteous in his death. He was a man of a retired ſpirit, and little minded the things of this life; but loved juſtice, and delighted in mercy. The products of his life were the fruits of the Spirit of Truth, therefore he is recorded amongſt the living as one of the Lord's worthies, whoſe remembrance ſhall live to generations to come. His teſtimony he kept to the end, and finiſhed his courſe with joy; ſo, on his behalf, let the living praiſe the Lord, as doth my ſoul at this time; even ſo for ever.

AMBROSE RIGGE.

Gatton in Surry, the 22d of the Tenth Month, 1679.

THE

THE TESTIMONY OF THOMAS ZACHARY, FOR ISAAC PENINGTON.

AH! my dear and ancient friend! what ſhall I ſay of thee? Thou haſt been a long traveller, even from thy youth, through Egypt and Babylon, and therein deſolate, ſeeking reſt, but finding none; till the Lord God, the Shepherd of Iſrael (who heard thy bemoanings) found thee out, and gathered thee by his Shepherd's crook out of and from all the barren mountains and wild obſcure places, wherein thou waſt wearied and loſt; even in the wilderneſs did the Lord allure thee, and bring thee out to his own flock, to hear and know his own voice from the voice of all ſtrange ſpirits, and to feed among his lambs in the paſtures of life; whereby thou greweſt ſtrong in the living word of power, and hadſt wherewith to miniſter of the words of life plentifully to others, through the divine preſence and overflowing life of the Father in thee and with thee; whereby many have been awakened, ſtrengthened, and comforted in the Lord alone, and the very joy of God's ſalvation hath reached to the mourners of Iſrael. Ah! a true labourer haſt thou been in God's vineyard; and ſowed, in much broken-

brokenneſs of heart and tears, the precious ſeed of God's kingdom, and waited in the faith and patience for the coming up thereof, and haſt ſeen the deſire of thy ſoul anſwered; and now is thy work, labour, and travail over; and as thou haſt ſowed in the Spirit, thou art now reaping of the Spirit, life everlaſting, and art releaſed out of this ſtrait and troubleſome world, wherein thou wert long a ſtranger and ſufferer, and hadſt no reſting-place in it; for thou earneſtly ſoughteſt for a city that had foundations, whoſe builder and maker was God alone; and now thou haſt found it, and art gathered into it, inheriting thy own manſion of peace, reſt, and joy, which the God of the juſt hath provided for thee.

O bleſſed and praiſed be the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, who is not the God of the dead, but of the living! and from the living aſcend heavenly praiſes and hallelujahs to him for ever and ever.

THOMAS ZACHARY.

THE

THE TESTIMONY OF ROBERT JONES, CONCERNING ISAAC PENINGTON.

IN the remembrance of my dear friend deceaſed, I had ſomething lived with me, to give in as in a way of teſtimony, according to the knowledge and ſenſe I had of him. He was a man very tender in ſpirit, and of a broken heart before the Lord, as I often had a living ſenſe thereof; the ſenſe of the power of an endleſs life being often upon him, which did affect many, breaking them down in great tenderneſs. His teſtimony for the Lord and his bleſſed truth was very ſound and weighty, to the reaching the conſciences of many. His labour in writing was in great tenderneſs, to the gathering of the ſcattered, to the building up of the convinced, and to the comfort and conſolation of the broken-hearted; for great were the bowels of mercy in him, even to all, eſpecially to ſuch who had breathings in their hearts after the Lord, and the way of his holineſs; his travail was greatly for ſuch; and by his tenderneſs in the Lamb's ſpirit he had an influence upon many, by reaching to the good in them; for his bowels were moved for them. Well! his reward is with the Lord for ever. In his family he

he was a man of knowledge, and of true watchfulneſs, that all thoſe that were under his care might be kept ſavoury in all things; being as a weaned child from the world, and thoſe things that periſh with the uſing. His moderation in all things was well known to many. What ſhall I ſay? He was a man wholly devoted in his heart to ſerve the Lord his God; yea, I am perſuaded it was his delight to do his will. I have had knowledge of him near twenty years, eſpecially in ſuffering; for it pleaſed the Lord ſo to order it, that our lot fell together in priſon ſeveral times; and I may ſay it was well it was ſo; for being made willing by the power of God (that did attend him) to ſuffer with great patience, cheerfulneſs, contentedneſs, and true nobility of ſpirit, he was a good example to me and others. I do not remember that ever I ſaw him caſt down or dejected in his ſpirit in the time of his cloſe confinement, nor ſpeak hardly of thoſe that perſecuted him; for he was of that temper as to love enemies, and to do good to thoſe that hated him; having received a meaſure of that virtue from Chriſt, his Maſter, that taught him ſo to do. Indeed I may ſay, in the priſon he was a help to the weak, being made inſtrumental in the hand of the Lord for that end; with much more than at preſent I ſhall expreſs. O the remembrance of the glory that did often overſhadow us in the place of confinement! ſo that indeed the priſon was made by the Lord to us (who was powerfully with us) as a pleaſant palace! I was often, with many more, by thoſe ſtreamings of life that did many times run through his veſſel, greatly overcome with the pure preſence and overcoming love of our God, that was plentifully ſhed abroad in our hearts. If I ſhould look back and call to remembrance my knowledge further of him, I could write much; but this ſhort teſtimony readily ſpringing up in my heart was with me to give forth in the behalf of my dear friend. And this further I have to add; indeed when I heard of his departure, it came near me; but conſidering how it was with him, being fully perſuaded he was fitted for

for his change, in the will of the Lord I was ſatisfied, counting his ſtate happy; having faith in God that he had laid down his head in peace, and entered into endleſs glory, where ſorrow ſhall be no more; having done the work his Maſter (Chriſt the Lord) gave him to do. He kept the faith to the end, and has finiſhed his courſe with joy, leaving a good ſavour behind him. With his ſpirit my ſoul has union. At the writing hereof, my heart is broken into tenderneſs, and mine eyes run over with tears. Oh! let us follow after him in faithfulneſs, fulfilling what is behind of our teſtimony for the Lord and his truth, being faithful to the death, as our brother that is gone before us was (who has left a good example behind him); ſo will the crown of life be our portion for ever! That it may be ſo with my own ſoul, and with the ſouls of all my tender brethren and ſiſters every where, is the cry of my heart to the Lord my God; and I hope it will be ſo till time ſhall be no more with me in this world.

ROBERT JONES.

THE

THE TESTIMONY OF THOMAS EVERNDEN, CONCERNING ISAAC PENINGTON.

CONCERNING our dear friend and brother Iſaac Penington, I have a teſtimony riſeth in my heart.

I, with many thouſands more in this our age, day, and generation, have cauſe to admire, bleſs, praiſe, and magnify the name of the Lord God of heaven and earth, in that he hath ſo largely manifeſted himſelf in the hearts of male and female, to the tendering their hearts, and enlightening their underſtandings; and to the gathering them out of the empty profeſſions, and by-ways, and crooked paths of this world, and to the purifying and ſanctifying their hearts by his powerful word; and giving them a good underſtanding in the knowledge of himſelf, and the deep myſteries of his heavenly kingdom; and enabling many of them, in the openings and motion of the ſame life and power, to ſpeak and write, to the anſwering unto the witneſs of God in many, and for the joy, comfort, and eſtabliſhment of others. I can truly ſay, dear Iſaac Penington was one of that number; for after full ſeven years travail and deep exerciſe of mind amongſt the empty profeſſions, and that God had

had ſhewed me mercy in drawing a little nearer to me, and ſhining by his glorious light into my conſcience, whereby I came to ſee the formality of profeſſors, and the emptineſs of all forms and profeſſions that ſtood in man's will, and the vileneſs of my own heart, and the neceſſity of being ſaved and ſanctified; and that there was no other way, but through and by the light of Chriſt Jeſus, that had wrought thus powerfully to convince me; then did ſome of this good man's writings come to my view, which anſwered to the light, life, and truth, which was raiſed of the Lord in my heart, as face anſwers face in a glaſs; I can truly ſay, to my joy, and comfort, and conſolation, and eſtament in the truth. So that the life and teſtimony of him was and is truly precious to me, and to all the faithful; and he ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance, who in the time of his life was a true ſubject in the kingdom of Jeſus, and a faithful labourer in his vineyard, and ſufferer for the truth, in the patience of the Lamb: whoſe delight was to devote himſelf to retiredneſs, and to wait upon God, to feel his powerful love to abound in his tender heart (this he accounted his greateſt glory and riches); by which he was made entirely to love and have a good eſteem of his faithful brethren in the truth; and was a man of peace and love to all, and greatly delighted in the love and unity of the brethren; and where the contrary appeared, it grieved his tender heart. And glad I am that it was my lot to be with him the two laſt meetings that he was at; the firſt of which was in the city of Canterbury, I being at that time very weak in body; and it lay upon me from the Lord to go to the meeting, where I found him, together with friends, waiting in ſilence upon the Lord; and when I had ſat down with them, O the mighty power of the Lord God that deſcended upon us! ſo that I could ſay the fountain of the great deeps was opened! and O the powerful, pleaſant, and cryſtal ſtreams, how did they abundantly flow into our hearts! And his cup was made to overflow, to the watering and refreſhing of the

the tender-hearted; ſo that God did make me a witneſs of the ſeal of his teſtimony, with many more, at thoſe two laſt meetings, as at ſome other times, where the life and power of God did abound in him, and ſweetly flow from him. And fully ſatisfied I am that the Lord hath taken him in a good time, and from the evil to come; and that he hath laid down his head in reſt and everlaſting peace with the Lord, where he is "at reſt from his labours, and his works follow "him;" and is in a full and perpetual enjoyment of life and glory. And although his body be in the duſt, yet his life ſpeaks, and his name is precious, and ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance.

Farewell, dear Iſaac! bleſs'd man of peace and love;
Thou art i'th'glorious reſt of God above.
And this upon my heart the Lord hath ſeal'd;
For by his Spirit to me it is reveal'd.

THOMAS EVERNDEN.

THE

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR, FOR ISAAC PENINGTON.

BLESSED be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of all his holy ones, from the beginning of the world until now; who hath kept all his by his mighty power and terrible name; who in all ages and generations, and under all miniſtrations and diſpenſations, have feared and ſerved him: glory be to his name for ever. And he hath been a God of eternal love unto them, and it hath been his banner ſpread over them, and is at this day, and hath been in all ages, and they have faithfully ſerved him, and offered holy offerings unto him, in his pure fear and reverence, from the ſenſe of his living and pure ſtreaming love; and the bleſſing of God hath been and is with them, and his glory he ſtill puts upon them, that they may bring forth unto him; and in the end, when they have faithfully ſerved the Lord in their day and generation, they may return to their long home, and be at reſt with God for ever, their portion for evermore.

Of this number was dear Iſaac Penington; a worthy man in his generation, dearly beloved of his God, and preſerved by him; ſo that many can ſay

how dear he was unto them, whilſt he lived amongſt them! And though dead, he yet liveth and ſpeaketh in thoſe pure and holy teſtimonies he hath borne unto truth, both in word and writing; ſo that many hearts can teſtify and bear witneſs that he was truly ſent of God to publiſh his moſt bleſſed and holy name; for he was a tender-ſpirited man, and dear to the Lord, and near unto his heart, where he tenderly lived and breathed, that in all things he might do his ſacred will. Ah! dear Iſaac Penington was a man near and dear unto my ſoul, as he was unto many others, becauſe of his inward tender-ſpiritedneſs! And methinks I feel him ſtill in the courſe of his life, ſince I have of late years more eſpecially known him. He was a man truly endued with humility; and when we have been together, and he would open his heart unto me, it would ſo anſwer my own life, and the exerciſes of my own condition, that my heart would be ſo affected with joy, that with melting bowels of God's eternal love we have often met and ſaluted each other; and I may ſay, dear brother Iſaac Penington, thou liveſt indeed, and my ſoul lives with thee. And what happineſs is it, that though dear and tender friends may be outwardly parted, yet are they dearly united together in the Lord Jeſus! And my ſoul at this time is overcome, melted, and broken within me, at the dear remembrance of thee. O dear Iſaac liveth, and his life is with us, and not ſeparated from us. And I pray God that every one who now profeſſeth the holy name of God may live as he did, in the ſingleneſs of their hearts; intirely, above all things, preſſing to be united unto the holy power of God alone! His cries were daily to God, that all truth's profeſſors might be really poſſeſſors of eternal life; and his miniſtry was accompanied with a holy, heavenly zeal, in the opening life of God's eternal power and wiſdom; ſo that the true birth within would many times leap at the ſweet ſalutation of his life; and the tender power of God, that ſpoke through him, would preciouſly raiſe the life in others to a ſweet harmonioufneſs, livingly

to

to praiſe God: for what he innocently and humbly aimed at, both in his words and writings (I can teſtify with many others) was God's pure glory. An intire innocent man he was, without guile in his heart; a true Nathaniel indeed; a lovely inſtrument in God's hand to the turning many to righteouſneſs, both by word and writing; a true tender friend to all that waited for God's ſalvation every where; and ſuch who laboured under inward exerciſes and travails of ſoul, he travailed with and for, and miniſtered unto many ſuch, both by word and writing, that they might come to be led by the ſpirit of true ſanctification, and know God's ſalvation.

About thirty years ſince, as I remember, in the North of England, I met with a book of Iſaac Penington's, which had this ſcripture following, as the ſubject whereof he treated: Job xxxviii. 2. "Who is "this that darkeneth counſel by words without know-"ledge?" This ſcripture, and the matter of his diſcourſe upon it, in that book, at that time I was affected with; for at that time I, with others, had precious openings of many heavenly things; being then ſenſible that no man could be a miniſter of Chriſt Jeſus without the work of regeneration wrought in his own heart; and not only ſo, but he muſt be ſent of God to publiſh the everlaſting goſpel, in the alone evidence of his power and Spirit, without the mixture of his own will, and obſerving his own time when to ſpeak, and alſo to be ſilent; ſo that we believed and were convinced it was to be a ſpiritual miniſtry, and to be diſpenſed in the motion and evidence of the ſame Spirit, otherwiſe it was "a darken-"ing of counſel by words without knowledge." This was my condition, with many others at that time, becauſe we ſpent many precious openings upon our own wills, and the wills and luſts of others.

Now this I bring to ſignify that dear Iſaac Penington, in thoſe days, had precious openings of truth, and was a man waiting for the kingdom of God, to be further inſtructed therein, and came to attain the

end of his divine breathings and heavenly desires. And those that honestly, in the fear of God, read his writings, may see how clearly he hath writ concerning the things of God's kingdom; that so both small and great, professors and profane, may, as in a glass, see their conditions; and those that as yet have not repented, may consider betimes, and repent, lest they perish.

CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR.

THE

THE TESTIMONY OF THOMAS ELLWOOD, CONCERNING ISAAC PENINGTON.

ALTHOUGH I am not ignorant that many weighty and living teſtimonies have been already given in by true and faithful witneſſes upon the ſame occaſion, which might well ſeem ſufficient to excuſe mine; yet am I not thereby clear, but find a preſſing upon my ſpirit to write a few lines alſo concerning this my dear deceaſed friend; to which, I confeſs, I am induced, and in ſome ſort engaged, by the double obligation of affection and gratitude. Love him I did, and that intirely, and ſure I am very deſervedly; for he was worthy indeed of love from all men, but more eſpecially from me, to whom he had been abundantly kind: for in the day wherein it pleaſed the Lord to awaken my ſoul, and call me out of the pollutions of the world, with reſpect alike to worſhip and converſation (for which I became the deriſion of my country, the ſcorn and contempt of my familiars and acquaintance, and in a manner an outcaſt alſo, expoſed as it were in the world to ſhift in it) how welcome was I then to him! how affectionately did he receive me! how regardfully did he take care of

me! how tenderly and like a father did he watch over me, that I might not be drawn back, or any way be betrayed from the ſimplicity of truth, as I had received it! And can I ever forget his love, or let his manifold kindneſs ſlip out of my mind! Oh no; the remembrance of him is pleaſant to me, and I think not of him without delight: for as a friend, I truly loved him; as a father (for ſuch his care of me rendered him to me) I reverenced him; as an elder, I honoured him, and that (as he right well deſerved) with double honour. My ſpirit was truly united to his; yea, my ſoul was linked and knit unto him in the holy covenant of life, which death hath not been able to diſſolve. Bear with me therefore a little, I intreat thee, whoever thou art, under whoſe eye theſe lines may chance to fall, if I take liberty to expreſs my ſenſe of this my beloved friend; wherein if I ſeem ſomewhat particular, know that my acquaintance with him was ſo.

He was naturally furniſhed with a ſharp and excellent wit, and that well cultivated and poliſhed with an ingenuous and liberal education; his diſpoſition was courteous and affable, free from pride and affectation. His ordinary diſcourſe cheerful and pleaſant, neither moroſe nor light, but innocently ſweet, and tempered with ſuch a ſerious gravity, as rendered his converſe both delightful and profitable.

From his childhood (as I have heard him occaſionally ſay) he was religiouſly inclined, and ſought the Lord in his tender years. And although the way of truth was not then ſo caſt up unto him, as ſince, through the goodneſs of the Lord, it was; yet that he had then, at times, ſome true touches and taſtes of life, ſome openings and ſights of heavenly things, (though not ſo clear, unmixed, and abiding as after) the treatiſes which he then wrote do manifeſtly declare. And albeit, at the firſt manifeſtation of truth unto him in this preſent diſpenſation, he was not without doubts and jealouſies concerning it, as himſelf relates; nor free for ſome time from diſputes and reaſon-

reaſonings againſt the meanneſs of its appearance, yet, after it pleaſed the Father, in the riches of his grace, to reveal his Son in him, thereby giving him to ſee, and certainly to know, what was that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; O how joyfully did he receive it! how willingly did he bow unto it! how readily did he yield his neck to the yoke of Chriſt! and how conſtantly and delightfully did he wear it! Did he then regard the pleaſures of the times, or value the preferments and honours of the world, though living at that time in the favour and affluence of it? No, no: he turned his back upon it all; eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt; and caſting down his crown at the foot of Jeſus, he willingly became a fool to the world, and to the wiſdom thereof, that he might be made truly wiſe to God. And ſurely he obtained his deſire herein; for as he honoured the Lord, and preferred him above all; ſo the Lord did highly honour him, and gave him liberally of the true and heavenly wiſdom, adorned with humility; ſo that he was learned, and yet humble; full of knowledge (heavenly knowledge) yet not puffed up thereby. And as he had freely received of the Lord, ſo did he freely and readily communicate thereof (as the following ſheets do witneſs) unto ſuch as ſtood in need of counſel, advice, information, or direction in their travel to the heavenly country. To which ſervice he was fitted and very well furniſhed by the experiences of his own travel; for the Lord had led him through many a ſtreight and difficulty; through many temptations, trials, and exerciſes, by which he had tried and proved him. Not only through the Red-Sea and the Wilderneſs had he paſſed, but the bottom of Jordan alſo had he ſeen, and the upholding delivering arm of the Lord through all had he known and felt; whereby he was able to ſpeak a word of information to the bewildered paſſenger; a word of encouragement to the weary and fainting traveller; a word of comfort to the afflicted ſoul, and of conſolation to the

wounded ſpirit. And O! how ſweetly have I heard it flow from him! How has it dropped like the dew, and diſtilled like the gentle rain! Ah! how tender, how compaſſionate, how full of bowels and feeling ſympathy was he! Surely his words have been many times as apples of gold in pictures of ſilver. For of a truth the Lord was with him, and his heavenly power did often fill his temple; and the Spirit of the Lord reſted upon him, and the fruits thereof were plentifully brought forth through him, in love, in joy, in peace, in long-ſuffering, in gentleneſs, in goodneſs, in faith, in meekneſs, and in temperance; ſo richly did the word of the Lord dwell in him. His delight was in the ſervice of God, to which he was wholly given up, and in it ſpent moſt of his time, either publickly in meetings waiting upon God, or privately in viſiting and miniſtering unto thoſe that were diſtreſſed, or any way afflicted in mind or body; and when at home, he was frequent in retirements, and very inward with the Lord. Very fervent he was in prayer, and very frequent; for the Spirit of grace and ſupplication was plentifully poured upon him, by which he often wreſtled with the Lord, and not in vain. The holy ſcriptures he read much, and with great delight and profit: for he made it not a curſory or formal buſineſs, nor ſought to pick out the meaning by his natural wit or learning; but, with a great compoſedneſs of mind, and reverence of ſpirit, waited to receive the true ſenſe of them from the openings of that divine Spirit, by which the penmen of them were inſpired. Great and ſtrong was the travail of his ſpirit for the converſion of others; and in a more eſpecial manner did his love flow and bowels yearn after the profeſſors of religion, for whom he continually and earneſtly laboured, both by word and writing, (not ceaſing to ſeek them to his dying day) that they might be brought off from the ſhadows, and come at length to inherit ſubſtance. And bleſſed be the Lord, by the powerful operation of the Spirit of God, through his miniſtry, many were turned to the truth,

and

and many confirmed in it: for the Lord was with him, and ſpake by him; ſo that his teaching was with divine authority, in the demonſtration of the Spirit, and of power. To the world, and the affairs of it, he was very much a ſtranger; but deeply experienced in the things of God: for his affection being ſet on things above, his converſation was in heaven, and his life hid with Chriſt in God. He was but a pilgrim on the earth, and is now gone home. In his family he was a true pattern of goodneſs and piety; not only by his grave example, but by his ſavoury inſtructions and exhortations to godlineſs. To his wife he was a moſt affectionate huſband; to his children, a loving and tender father; to his ſervants, a mild and gentle maſter; to his friends, a firm and faſt friend; to the poor, compaſſionate and open-hearted; and to all courteous and kind. Very zealous he was for the truth, unwearied in promoting it, bold and undaunted in the defence of it, faithful in his teſtimony to it, patient and cheerful in his ſuffering for it. A right good and pious man indeed was he; one that truly feared God, and warily eſchewed evil.

How great and various his exerciſes were in the times of his former profeſſions; how earneſt and preſſing his ſpirit then was after the pure enjoyment of God; how ſtrange and admirable the dealings of the Lord were with him; and how far he came at length to ſee the travail of his ſoul, and to be ſatisfied; as himſelf of all men beſt knew; ſo he hath occaſionally ſcattered here and there a hint thereof, in ſeveral pieces of the following books: which, for the reader's ſatisfaction, I had once thought to have collected and preſented here together; but finding, amongſt his looſe papers, a ſummary account thereof, written with his own hand, above a dozen years ago, when being in bonds for Chriſt's ſake, he was ſick near unto death, I choſe rather to tranſcribe that hither, and refer the more curious and induſtrious reader to the ſeveral books and papers of the enſuing volumes, wherein he hath touched the ſame ſubject; as namely, *The Way of*

of Life and Death, &c. in the preface, and in the poſtſcript. *Babylon the Great deſcribed*, &c. *The ſcattered Sheep*, &c. *An Examination of the Grounds*, &c. and *A Glaſs for Profeſſors. Where is the Wiſe? Obſervations on* Rom. xiv. 20. *Of the Church in its firſt and pureſt State. The holy Truth and People defended.* Not to enumerate each particular,

The account he gives of his ſpiritual travail is as followeth:

" A true and faithful relation, in brief, concerning
" myſelf, in reference to my ſpiritual travails,
" and the Lord's dealings with me. I ſay true
" and faithful, becauſe it is of the truth, and
" not given forth in my own will, but in the
" Lord's will and requirings of me at this time,
" for his ſervice. The relation is as follows:

" I have been a man of ſorrow and affliction from
" my childhood, feeling the want of the Lord, and
" mourning after him: ſeparated by him from the
" love, nature, and ſpirit of this world, and turned
" in ſpirit towards him, almoſt ever ſince I could re-
" member.

" In the ſenſe of my loſt eſtate, I ſought after the
" Lord; I read the ſcriptures; I watched over mine
" own heart; I cried unto the Lord for what I felt
" the want of; I bleſſed his name in what he merci-
" fully did for me, and beſtowed on me, &c. What-
" ever I read in the ſcriptures as the way of God to
" my underſtanding, I gave myſelf to the faithful
" practice of; being contented to meet with all the
" reproach, oppoſition, and ſeveral kinds of ſuffer-
" ings, which it pleaſed the Lord to meaſure out to
" me therein. And I cannot but ſay that the Lord
" was good unto me, did viſit me, did teach me, did
" help me, did teſtify his acceptance of me many
" times, to the refreſhing and joy of my heart before
" him.

" But

" But my ſoul was not ſatisfied with what I met " with, nor indeed could be, there being further " quickenings and preſſings in my ſpirit, after a more " full, certain, and ſatisfactory knowledge; even after " the ſenſe, ſight, and enjoyment of God, as was teſ- " tified in the ſcriptures to have been felt and enjoyed " in the former times: for I ſaw plainly that there " was a ſtop of the ſtreams, and a great falling ſhort " of the power, life, and glory which they partook " of. We had not ſo the Spirit, nor were ſo in the " faith, nor did ſo walk and live in God, as they did. " They were come to mount Sion, and the heavenly " Jeruſalem, &c. which we had hardly ſo much as " the literal knowledge or apprehenſion what they " were. So that I ſaw the whole courſe of religion " among us was, for the moſt part, but a talk, to " what they felt, enjoyed, poſſeſſed, and lived in.

" This ſenſe made me ſick at heart indeed, and ſet " me upon deep crying to God, cloſe ſearching the " ſcriptures, and waiting on God, that I might re- " ceive the pure ſenſe and underſtanding of them, " from and in the light, and by the help of his Spirit. " And what the Lord did beſtow on me in that ſtate, " with thankfulneſs I remember before him at this " very day: for he was then my God, and a pitier " and a watcher over me; though he had not pleaſed " then to direct me how to ſtay my mind upon him. " And then I was led (indeed I was led, I did not " run of myſelf) into a way of ſeparation from the " worſhip of the world into a gathered ſociety: for " this both the ſcripture and the Spirit of God in me " gave teſtimony unto; and what we then met with, " and what leadings and help we then felt, there is a " remembrance and teſtimony in my heart to this day. " But there was ſomewhat wanting, and we miſtook " our way: for whereas we ſhould have preſſed for- " ward into the ſpirit and power, we ran too much " outward into the letter and form: and though the " Lord in many things helped us, yet therein he was " againſt us, and brought darkneſs, confuſion, and

" ſcatter-

" ſcattering upon us. I was ſorely broken and dark-
" ened, and in this darkened ſtate ſometimes lay ſtill for
" a long ſeaſon, ſecretly mourning and crying out to the
" Lord night and day. Sometimes I ran about, hark-
" ening after what might appear or break forth in
" others; but never met with any thing whereto there
" was the leaſt anſwer in my heart, ſave in one people,
" who had a touch of truth; but I never expreſſed ſo
" much to any of them, nor indeed felt them at all
" able to reach my condition.

" At laſt, after all my diſtreſſes, wanderings, and
" ſore travails, I met with ſome of the writings of
" this people called QUAKERS, which I caſt a ſlight
" eye upon and diſdained, as falling very ſhort of
" that wiſdom, light, life, and power, which I had
" been longing for, and ſearching after. I had like-
" wiſe, ſome pretty diſtance of time after this, op-
" portunity of meeting with ſome of them; and di-
" vers of them were by the Lord moved (I know it
" to be ſo ſince) to come to me. As I remember,
" at the very firſt they reached to the life of God in
" me, which life anſwered their voice, and cauſed
" a great love in me to ſpring to them; but ſtill in
" my reaſonings with them, and diſputes alone (in
" my mind) concerning them, I was very far off
" from owning them, as ſo knowing the Lord, or ſo
" appearing in his life and power as my condition
" needed, and as my ſoul waited for. Yea, the more
" I converſed with them, the more I ſeemed in my
" underſtanding and reaſon to get over them, and to
" trample them under my feet, as a poor, weak, ſilly,
" contemptible generation, who had ſome ſmatterings
" of truth in them, and ſome honeſt deſires towards
" God; but very far off from the clear and full un-
" derſtanding of his way and will. And this was the
" effect almoſt of every diſcourſe with them; they ſtill
" reached my heart, and I felt them in the ſecrets of
" my ſoul; which cauſed the love in me always to
" continue, yea, ſometimes to increaſe towards them:
" but daily my underſtanding got more and more over

" them,

" them, and therein I daily more and more deſpiſed
" them.

" After a long time I was invited to hear one of
" them (as I had been often, they in tender love pi-
" tying me, and feeling my want of that which they
" poſſeſſed); and there was an anſwer in my heart,
" and I went with fear and trembling, with deſires to
" the Moſt High, who was over all, and knew all,
" that I might not receive any thing for truth which
" was not of him, nor withſtand any thing which was
" of him; but might bow before the appearance of
" the Lord my God, and none other. And indeed,
" when I came, I felt the preſence and power of the
" Moſt High among them, and words of truth from
" the Spirit of truth reaching to my heart and con-
" ſcience, opening my ſtate as in the preſence of the
" Lord. Yea, I did not only feel words and demon-
" ſtrations from without, but I felt the dead quick-
" ened, the ſeed raiſed; inſomuch that my heart (in
" the certainty of light, and clearneſs of true ſenſe)
" ſaid, *This is he, this is he, there is no other: this is*
" *he whom I have waited for and ſought after from my*
" *childhood; who was always near me, and had often be-*
" *gotten life in my heart; but I knew him not diſtinctly,*
" *nor how to receive him, or dwell with him.* And then
" in this ſenſe (in the melting and breakings of my
" ſpirit) was I given up to the Lord, to become his,
" both in waiting for the further revealing of his ſeed
" in me, and to ſerve him in the life and power of
" his ſeed.

" Now what I met with after this, in my travails,
" in my waitings, in my ſpiritual exerciſes, is not to
" be uttered: only in general I may ſay this, I met
" with the very ſtrength of hell. The cruel oppreſ-
" ſor roared upon me, and made me feel the bitter-
" neſs of his captivity, while he had any power: yea,
" the Lord was far from my help, and from the voice
" of my roaring. I alſo met with deep ſubtleties
" and devices to entangle me in that wiſdom, which
" ſeemeth able to make wiſe in the things of God,

" but

" but indeed is fooliſhneſs, and a ſnare to the ſoul,
" bringing it back into captivity, where the enemy's
" gins prevail. And what I met with outwardly
" from my own dear father, from my kindred, from
" my ſervants, from the people and powers of the
" world, for no other cauſe but fearing my God,
" worſhipping him as he hath required of me, and
" bowing to his ſeed, which is his Son, who is to be
" worſhipped by men and angels for evermore, the
" Lord my God knoweth, before whom my heart and
" ways are; who preſerved me in love to them, in
" the midſt of all I ſuffered from them, and doth
" ſtill ſo preſerve me; bleſſed be his pure and holy
" name.

" But ſome may deſire to know what I have at
" laſt met with? I anſwer, *I have met with the Seed.*
" Underſtand that word, and thou wilt be ſatisfied,
" and inquire no further. I have met with my God;
" I have met with my Saviour; and he hath not been
" preſent with me without his ſalvation; but I have
" felt the healings drop upon my ſoul from under his
" wings. I have met with the true knowledge, the
" knowledge of life, the living knowledge, the know-
" ledge which is life; and this hath had the true vir-
" tue in it, which my ſoul hath rejoiced in, in the
" preſence of the Lord. I have met with the Seed's
" Father, and in the Seed I have felt him my Father.
" There I have read his nature, his love, his compaſ-
" ſions, his tenderneſs, which have melted, over-
" come, and changed my heart before him. I have
" met with the Seed's faith, which hath done and
" doth that which the faith of man can never do. I
" have met with the true birth, with the birth which
" is heir of the kingdom, and inherits the kingdom.
" I have met with the true ſpirit of prayer and ſup-
" plication, wherein the Lord is prevailed with, and
" which draws from him whatever the condition
" needs; the ſoul always looking up to him in the
" will, and in the time and way, which is acceptable
" with him. What ſhall I ſay? I have met with the

" true

" true peace, the true righteouſneſs, the true holineſs,
" the true reſt of the ſoul, the everlaſting habitation,
" which the redeemed dwell in: and I know all theſe
" to be true, in him that is true, and am capable of
" no doubt, diſpute, or reaſoning in my mind about
" them; it abiding there, where it hath received the
" full aſſurance and ſatisfaction. And alſo I know
" very well and diſtinctly in ſpirit where the doubts
" and diſputes are, and where the certainty and full
" aſſurance is, and in the tender mercy of the Lord
" am preſerved out of the one, and in the other.

" Now, the Lord knows, theſe things I do not ut-
" ter in a boaſting way; but would rather be ſpeak-
" ing of my nothingneſs, my emptineſs, my weak-
" neſs, my manifold infirmities, which I feel more
" than ever. The Lord hath broken the man's part
" in me, and I am a worm, and no man before him.
" I have no ſtrength to do any good or ſervice for
" him: nay, I cannot watch over or preſerve myſelf.
" I feel daily that I keep not alive my own ſoul; but
" am weaker before men, yea, weaker in my ſpirit, as
" in myſelf, than ever I have been. But I cannot
" but utter to the praiſe of my God, and I feel his
" arm ſtretched out for me; and my weakneſs, which
" I feel in myſelf, is not my loſs, but advantage be-
" fore him. And theſe things I write, as having no
" end at all therein of my own, but felt it this morn-
" ing required of me; and ſo in ſubmiſſion and ſub-
" jection to my God have I given up to do it, leaving
" the ſucceſs and ſervice of it with him."

Ayleſbury, 15th of
3d month, 1667. I. P.

Neither to him was it given only to believe, but to ſuffer alſo for the ſake of Chriſt. His impriſonments were many, and ſome of them long, which with great conſtancy and quietneſs of mind he underwent. But becauſe ſo general an account may perhaps not anſwer the

the expectation and desire of the reader, I will here subjoin a more particular; but that as contracted and short as may be.

His first imprisonment was at Aylesbury gaol, in the years 1661 and 1662, being committed thither for worshipping God in his own house; where, for seventeen weeks, great part of it in winter, he was kept in a cold and very incommodious room, without a chimney; from which hard usage his tender body contracted so great and violent a distemper, that for several weeks after he was not able to turn himself in his bed.

His second imprisonment was in the year 1664, being taken out of a meeting, where he with others were peaceably waiting upon the Lord, and sent to Aylesbury gaol, where he again remained a prisoner between seventeen and eighteen weeks.

His third imprisonment was in the year 1665, being taken up, with many others, in the open street of Amersham, as they were carrying and accompanying the body of a deceased friend to the grave. From hence he was sent again to Aylesbury gaol; but this commitment being in order to banishment, was but for a month, or thereabouts.

His fourth imprisonment was in the same year 1665, about a month after his releasement from the former. Hitherto his commitment had been by the civil magistrates; but now, that he might experience the severity of each, he fell into the military hands. A rude soldier, without any other warrant than what he carried in his scabbard, came to his house, and told him he came to fetch him before Sir Philip Palmer, one of the deputy-lieutenants of the county. He meekly went, and was by him sent with a guard of soldiers to Aylesbury gaol, with a kind of mittimus, importing, "That the gaoler should receive and keep him in safe "custody during the pleasure of the earl of Bridge-"water;" who had it seems conceived so great, as well as unjust, displeasure against this innocent man, that although (it being the sickness year) the plague was

was ſuſpected to be in the gaol, he would not be prevailed with, by the earneſt importunity of a perſon both of conſiderable quality and power in the county, only to permit Iſaac Penington to be removed to another houſe in the town, and there kept priſoner until the gaol were clear. Afterwards a priſoner dying in the gaol of the plague, the gaoler's wife, her huſband being abſent, gave leave to Iſaac Penington to remove to another houſe, where he was ſhut up about ſix weeks: after which, by the procurement of the earl of Ancram, a releaſe was ſent from the ſaid Philip Palmer, by which he was diſcharged, after he had ſuffered impriſonment three quarters of a year, with apparent hazard of his life, and that for no offence.

By that time he had been at home about three weeks, a party of ſoldiers from the ſaid Philip Palmer (by order of the earl of Bridgewater, as was reported) came to his houſe, and ſeizing him in bed, carried him away to Ayleſbury gaol again; where, without any cauſe ſhewed, or crime objected, he was kept in priſon a year and a half, in rooms ſo cold, damp, and unhealthy, that it went very near to coſt him his life, and procured him ſo great a diſtemper, that he lay weak of it ſeveral months. At length a relation of his wife's, by an habeas corpus, removed him to the King's-Bench bar, where (with the wonder of the court that a man ſhould be ſo long impriſoned for nothing) he was at laſt releaſed in the year 1668. This was his fifth impriſonment.

His ſixth impriſonment was in the year 1670, in Reading gaol, whither he went to viſit his friends that were ſufferers there for the teſtimony of Jeſus. Of which notice being given to one called Sir William Armorer, a juſtice of the peace for that county, and living in the town, he was forthwith ſent for before him, and committed to the gaol, thereby becoming a fellow-ſufferer with them, whom, being ſufferers for the truth, he came to viſit. Here he continued a priſoner a year and three quarters, and was brought un-

der the ſentence of premunire; but at length the Lord delivered him.

Thus through many tribulations did he enter into the kingdom; having been exerciſed, tried, proved, and approved by the Lord. Long was he in the warfare, and, like a good ſoldier, manfully endured the fight of afflictions: but having fought the good fight, and kept the faith, he hath now, in the Lord's good time, finiſhed his courſe, and is gone to poſſeſs the crown of righteouſneſs laid up for him, and all thoſe that love the bright appearance of the Lord. A faithful labourer he was in the Lord's vineyard for many years; but now hath he ceaſed from his labour, and his works follow him. He walked with God, and is tranſlated. To the Lord he lived, and in the Lord he died, and by the Spirit of the Lord he is pronounced bleſſed: bleſſed for ever be the name of the Lord therefore.

THE

THE TESTIMONY OF ALEXANDER PARKER, CONCERNING ISAAC PENINGTON.

HAVING ſeen and read many lively and freſh teſtimonies of ſeveral of my dear brethren concerning our dear friend and brother Iſaac Penington, deceaſed, I did ſatisfy myſelf with what was written by them, being ſo full and large, and anſwering my own ſenſe, that I did acquieſce in my own mind, not intending to appear in publick in this matter; but of late hearing a teſtimony read, written by his dear wife M. P. it did ſo revive the remembrance of him, that the ſenſe of that love and endeared affection which I always had for him, did ſo work in my mind, that I could not be clear without caſting in my mite amongſt the reſt of my brethren, having known him from the early days of his convincement of the bleſſed truth, in which he lived, and for which he ſuffered; and *in the faith of which holy truth he finiſhed his courſe.*

The firſt time that I ſaw his face was at Reading in Berkſhire, in the twelfth month, called February, 1656. And though at that time he had not the outward garb and appearance of a QUAKER, yet did mine eye be-

hold an inward beauty and hidden virtue of life in him; and my ſoul, in the bowels of the love of truth, did cleave unto him, and I could have embraced him in the ſenſe thereof; but in thoſe early days we were cautious, and laid hands on no man ſuddenly. He did not haſtily join in ſociety with us; but for ſome time did reaſon about many things. Though he owned the principal doctrines of truth, yet the inſtruments that declared it, and their way and manner, ſeemed very contemptible to him, until he heard that faithful ſervant of God G. F. (who was the firſt man that proclaimed the goſpel of life and ſalvation amongſt us) at a meeting at J. Crook's, in Bedfordſhire, at the time called Whitſuntide, in the year 1658; at which meeting the myſtery of iniquity was ſo opened, and the myſtery of the goſpel of peace ſo plainly manifeſteſt, that he was fully ſatisfied; and from that time gave up himſelf to the obedience of truth, and took up the croſs, and became a diſciple and follower of Chriſt, and ſuffered with us for the name and teſtimony of Jeſus, and bore the ſcoffings and reproaches of the ungodly with much patience, accounting it his riches: and in much love did he embrace and receive the meſſengers and ſervants of God into his houſe; where were many precious meetings, and many were convinced and brought into the way of life, amongſt whom he was a good pattern, and an help unto them; and when they were bowed down in ſpirit, and afflicted in mind, he was a great help and comfort to ſuch, having himſelf travelled through various and deep exerciſes, through which the Lord brought him, and eſtabliſhed him in righteouſneſs. *He was a man of a quick apprehenſion; and when any ſpark did ariſe from the coals of God's altar, it quickly kindled in him a flame of holy zeal for God and his truth; even in the morning of his convincement, and in the freſh openings of life, many living teſtimonies were given forth by him,* as in his writings may be ſeen, to which the reader is referred. His heart and ſoul were much drawn forth unto the

the profeſſors of religion of all perſuaſions, having a deep travail for them; and in much bowels of love and tender compaſſion did he intreat and beſeech them to turn to the true light, that they might be converted and healed. But few did regard his deep travails for them; which doubtleſs will riſe in judgment as a teſtimony againſt them. And I do deſire that thoſe, whoſe day is not over, may yet conſider, and take a farther view into his writings, and ſearch into their own hearts, that with the light of Jeſus that ſhines there they may come to a true ſight of their ſins, and ſo to a godly ſorrow, which may work repentance unto life, that they may find mercy with the Lord, and peace to their immortal ſouls. In all his writings and declarations he ſtill pointed to life, and preſſed all to mind the power of godlineſs, and not to ſettle or content themſelves in the letter or form of religion. This, oh! this, was the very bent of his mind; and the ſtrong cries of his ſoul to the Lord were, that all might partake of life, even the life of Jeſus, in their mortal bodies, which he, through the death of the croſs, was made a partaker of; in which life he lived unto God, and was a lively pattern of humility, walking uprightly, in innocency, before the Lord. He was a man weaned from the world, and redeemed from the earth, his mind being daily exerciſed in things of a higher nature, drinking daily of the water that Chriſt gives; which was in " him a well of living water, ſpringing up " unto eternal life," which filled his veſſel, and cauſed his cup to overflow. Much might be ſaid of this good man; but words are too ſhort to ſignify the depth of his inward life. I write not theſe things to exalt or ſet up man; but to exalt and magnify the grace of God, which was in him; which was ſufficient for him; by the power of which he was carried on through all his troubles and exerciſes; by which he was taught to deny ungodlineſs, and all the evil luſts of this wicked world; and to live righteouſly, ſoberly, and godly in this world; in which godly life he per-

ſiſted to the end of his days. And as he lived in the Lord, even ſo he died, laying down his head in peace, and liveth with the Lord in the enjoyment of his love, where there is "joy and felicity for ever," and his memory is ſweet and bleſſed. O! that every one that profeſſeth the holy truth "may ſo run, that they may "obtain the crown of eternal life." This is the travail and the earneſt deſire of him who ſeeketh the good of all mankind.

London, the 5th of the 2d Month, 1681.

ALEXANDER PARKER.

THE

THE

TESTIMONY

OF

MARY PENINGTON,

Concerning her dear HUSBAND

ISAAC PENINGTON.

WHILST I keep ſilent touching thee, O thou bleſſed of the Lord and his people, my heart burneth within me. I muſt make mention of thee, for thou was a moſt pleaſant plant of renown, planted by the right-hand of the Lord, and "thou tookeſt "deep rooting downwards, and ſprangeſt upward." The dew of heaven fell on thee, and made thee fruitful, and thy fruit was of a fragrant ſmell, and moſt delightful. O! where ſhall I begin to recount the Lord's remarkable dealings with thee! He ſet his love on thee, O thou one of the Lord's peculiar choice, to place his name on! Waſt not thou ſanctified in the womb? Thy very babiſh days declared of what ſtock and lineage thou wert. Thou deſiredſt after "the ſincere milk of "the word, as a new-born babe," even in the bud of thy age. O! who can declare how thou haſt travelled towards the holy land in thy very infancy as to days! O! who can tell what thy ſoul hath felt in thy travel! O! thou was gotten to be in the mount with the Lord, and his ſpiritual Moſes, when the princes and elders ſaw but his back-parts, and feared and quaked to hear

the terrible thunderings in Mount Sinai. The breaſt of conſolation was held out to thee early, and thou ſuckedſt thy fill, till the veſſel could no longer contain; for thou couldſt not in that fulneſs "ſee God and live" in this tabernacle: ſo that thou beſoughteſt the Lord to abate this exceeding excellent glory, and give thee ſuch a meaſure as was food convenient. O! the heavenly, bright, living openings that were given to thee many years paſt! His light ſhone round about thee, and the book of the creatures was opened to thee; and his myſteries (made known to holy men of old, who ſpoke them forth as they were inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt) were made known to thee to diſcern. Such a ſtate as I have never known any in, in that day, have I heard thee declare of. O! this did it pleaſe the Lord to withdraw and ſhut up as in one day, and ſo leave thee deſolate, and mourning many a day; weary of the night and of the day; poor and naked; ſad, diſtreſſed, and bowed down. Thou refuſedſt to be comforted, becauſe it was a time of night, and not day; and becauſe he that was gone was not come. His time of manifeſting his love was not at hand; but he was as a ſtranger, or one gone into a far country, not ready to return; and thou wouldſt accept of no beloved in his abſence, but teſtifiedſt that he thy ſoul longed for was not in this or that obſervation, nay, nor opening; but thy beloved, when he came, would ſit as a refiner's fire, and would come with "his fan in his hand, and "thoroughly purge his floor." No likeneſs, or appearance, or taking ſound of words, or viſions, or revelations, wouldſt thou take up with, inſtead of him that was life indeed. O! the many years thou putteſt thy mouth in the duſt, and wenteſt ſoftly, and bowed down, and hadſt anguiſh of ſoul, weeping and groaning, panting and ſighing! O! who can tell the one half of the bitterneſs of thy ſoul! Becauſe ſubſtance was in thine eye, all ſhadows did fly away from before thee. Thou couldſt not feed on that which was not bread from heaven. In this ſtate I married thee, and my love was drawn to thee; becauſe I found thou ſaweſt the deceit

deceit of all notions, and layeſt as one that " refuſed " to be comforted" by any thing that had the appearance of religion, till HE came to his temple, who is " truth, and no lye." For all thoſe ſhews of religion were very manifeſt to thee, ſo that thou wert ſick and weary of them all. And in this my heart cleft to thee, and a deſire was in me to be ſerviceable to thee in this deſolate condition: for thou waſt alone and miſerable in this world, and I gave up much to be a companion to thee in this thy ſuffering. O! my ſenſe, my ſenſe of thee and thy ſtate in that day, even makes me as one dumb; for the greatneſs of it is beyond my capacity to utter.

This little teſtimony to thy hidden life, my dear and precious one, in a day and time when none of the Lord's gathered people knew thy face, nor were in any meaſure acquainted with thy many ſorrows, and deep wounds and diſtreſſes, have I ſtammered out, that it might not be forgotten that thou waſt in the land of the living, and thy freſh ſprings were in God, and light was on thy Goſhen, when thick darkneſs covered the people. But now that the day is broken forth, and thou wert ſo eminently gathered into it, and a faithful publiſher of it, I leave this bright ſtate of thine to be declared of by the " ſons of " the morning," who have been witneſſes of the riſing of that " bright ſtar of righteouſneſs in thee," and its guiding thee to the Saviour, even Jeſus, " the " firſt and the laſt:" they, I ſay, who are " ſtrong, " and have overcome the evil-one," and are fathers in Iſrael, have declared of thy life in God, and have publiſhed it in many teſtimonies here to the glorious ſaving truth, that thou wert partaker of, livedſt and paſſedſt hence in, as in a fiery chariot, into the eternal habitation with the holy ſaints, prophets, and apoſtles of Jeſus.

Ah me! he is gone! he that none exceeded in kindneſs, in tenderneſs, in love inexpreſſible to the relation as a wife. Next to the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus to my ſoul, was his love precious and delightful to me.

My

My boſom-one! that was as my guide and counſellor! my pleaſant companion! my tender ſympathizing friend! as near to the ſenſe of my pain, ſorrow, grief, and trouble as it was poſſible. Yet this great help and benefit is gone; and I, a poor worm, *a very little one to him, compaſſed about with many infirmities*, through mercy let him go without an unadviſed word of diſcontent, or inordinate grief. Nay, further; ſuch was the great kindneſs the Lord ſhewed to me in that hour, that my ſpirit aſcended with him in that very moment that his ſpirit left his body; and I ſaw him ſafe in his own manſion, and rejoiced with him, and was at that inſtant gladder of it, than ever I was of enjoying him in the body. And from this ſight my ſpirit returned again to perform my duty to his outward tabernacle, to the anſwer of a good conſcience.

This teſtimony to dear Iſaac Penington is from the greateſt loſer of all that had a ſhare in his life,

This was written at my houſe, at Woodſide, the 27th of the 2d month, 1680, between 12 and 1 at night, whilſt I was watching with my ſick child.

MARY PENINGTON.

THE

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN PENINGTON,

To his dear and deceaſed FATHER

ISAAC PENINGTON.

GIVE me leave alſo, in a few words, to expreſs my ſenſe of him (ſeeing I have been no ſmall ſharer in the loſs) a man that had known the depths of Satan, and had a ſtock to loſe before he could embrace truth in the ſimplicity of it; yet came forth in clearneſs: which is the more remarkable, inaſmuch as few came near him in thoſe bright openings and piercing wiſdom he was endued with in thoſe days; whereby he ſtruck at all falſe foundations and profeſſions, and ſaw their ſhortneſs, and the very thing they wanted. So that when I have taken a view of his former writings, and beheld the glory he once had, and withal reflected on his preſent condition, on his poverty, on his nothingneſs, on his ſelf-denial, and ſelf-abaſement; how little he eſteemed all his former knowledge, and ſights of the heavenly things themſelves, in compariſon of the more excellent knowledge he afterwards received, and how he could be a fool for Chriſt's ſake; the thing hath affected me, and not a little, many times. O! he was not one that could deck himſelf, or deſired to appear before

before men, or his very brethren; but ever choſe to be more to the Lord than to men. And when any have been deeply reached through his tender, yet ſearching lively teſtimony, O how great was his care that none might look out too much at the inſtrument, or receive truth in the affectionate part! He was alſo a meek man, and very loving; courteous to all; ready to ſerve his very enemies and perſecutors; of whom ſome, from an ill opinion of him, were gained to love and eſteem him. And where-ever he entered into a friendſhip with any, he was conſtant. Whatever provocations he might afterwards receive from any of them, he could not let go his hold; but ever retained a good-will towards them, and an earneſt deſire for their welfare. I have alſo obſerved, where he hath been engaged on truth's behalf to rebuke any ſharply, who were declining from their firſt love, and deviating from the truth as it is in Jeſus, it hath been with ſo much reluctancy and averſeneſs to his natural temper, as I never diſcerned the like in any; and herein I am not alone. So that it may be ſafely ſaid he never uſed the rod, but with bowels to reclaim; and in the love was drawn to ſmite what the pureſt love could not ſuffer to go unrebuked. What he was in the church of God for exemplarineſs, for deep travail, for ſound judgment, and heavenly miniſtry, I know not a few are very ſenſible of. And have not I ſeen his cup many times overflow, and him ſo filled, that the veſſel was ſcarce able to contain! O it was delightful to me to be with him (as it was often my lot) in his ſervice on truth's account! And my cry is, that I may walk worthy of ſo dear a parent, ſo unwearied and earneſt a traveller for mine and others eternal well-being, and ſo faithful and eminent a labourer in God's vineyard; who is now gone to his reſt in a good day, having firſt ſeen the effects of the travail of his ſoul, and been ſatisfied in the Lord. But he hath left us, his children, behind, for whom he hath often prayed, and beſought the Lord with tears, *that we might walk in his ſteps, and our father's God*

God might be our God, and that the bleſſings of our father's life might deſcend upon us. And we are ſtill, after much weakneſs, upon the ſtage of this world; which, that it may be ſo rightly improved, that we may walk worthy of the manifold viſitations we have had from him in particular, and many faithful labourers in general, is the inceſſant deſire of

(Him that hopes, with thankfulneſs to the Lord, to reverence his memory, as well as that he honours him in the relation of a dear and tender father)

The 9th of the 3d month, 1681. JOHN PENINGTON.

POSTSCRIPT.

IT pleaſed the Lord to remove him from us, and take him to himſelf, on the eighth day of the eighth month, 1679, between three and four in the morning, at one of my dear mother's farms in Kent, in the pariſh of Goodneſtone, called Goodneſtone-Court. They had been among their tenants in that country, and in their return home ſpent ſome time here; but the day appointed for my dear father to return, he was viſited with this ſickneſs, whereof he died, having lain juſt a week. His body was conveyed thence (ſome of his relations and London friends accompanying it) to London, thence into Buckinghamſhire to his own houſe, and ſo to the burying-place of friends belonging to Chalfont-meeting (called Jordan's); where he was honourably buried, being accompanied by ſome hundreds of friends and neighbours.

THE

THE

Way of LIFE and DEATH

Made MANIFEST, and ſet before MEN;

WHEREBY

The many Paths of DEATH are impleaded, and the one Path of LIFE propounded, and pleaded for;

IN

SOME POSITIONS

CONCERNING

The APOSTASY from the CHRISTIAN SPIRIT and LIFE;

WITH

Some PRINCIPLES guiding out of it;

AS ALSO

An ANSWER to ſome OBJECTIONS, whereby the Simplicity in ſome may be entangled;

HELD FORTH

In tender Good-will, both to PAPISTS and PROTESTANTS, who have generally erred from the Faith for theſe many Generations, ſince the Days of the Apoſtles; and with that which they have erred from are they comprehended.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

THE PREFACE.

MY ſoul hath ſtill in remembrance the grievous ſhakings and rendings that have been in this nation, which entered deep into the bowels of it, and made every heart ake, and every heart aſtoniſhed. This nation was ſettled in religion and outward peace, in ſuch a way as was pleaſing to moſt; but yet there was a ſpirit within, which had been long groaning under oppreſſion, whoſe ſighs and cries entered into the ears of the Lord: and he roſe up in his fury and jealouſy, and rent the heavens, and rent the earth; ſo breaking the very foundation of both, that men generally were amazed, and wondered what would become of all. The former religion was almoſt buried in confuſion, and in danger of being utterly loſt. A long-ſpun corroding war were we entangled in, which adminiſtered no hopes nor likelihood of peace. The hand of the Lord reached through all theſe dominions; magiſtracy, miniſtry, the common people, the people of God (both ſuch as were accounted ſo, and ſuch as were indeed ſo), the line of confuſion was ſtretched over them all; they did all reel and totter like a drunken man, as if they had been ſo to fall as to riſe up no more.

But behold how ſuddenly and unexpectedly was there a ſettlement of all again! the nation ſettled in peace, magiſtracy ſettled, miniſtry ſettled, the common people ſettled, and thoſe which were ſhaken in their ſpirits got into their ſeveral ways in religion, and

ſettled again. Thus there was a general healing of all again, ſave only of a few, whoſe ſpirits God had ſo reached, that their wound was incurable; and unleſs ſomewhat of God had been brought forth, which the world cannot know (nay, the religious ſpirit of man, which is below, can no more reach it than the common ſpirit of the world), they had remained miſerable, loſt, ſcattered, and confounded to this day. But the Lord hath in infinite mercy viſited them in the ſeaſon of diſtreſs: and there hath a little fooliſh thing broke forth (at which all the wiſe and religious in the ſpirit of this world cannot but ſtumble), which hath adminiſtered relief, and diſcovered the foundation whereon they alſo can ſettle. So that now there is as it were an univerſal ſettlement, as every creature is gathered into the center which is proper and ſuitable to its ſpirit to bottom on.

Now this I have to ſay to all; Let every one look to his foundation; for the Lord can ariſe again; yea, and will ariſe again, and ſhake once more; and then the heavens and the earth, which have not a true foundation, cannot but fall. If the earth be not founded upon and ſettled in righteouſneſs, its preſent eſtabliſhment will not ſtand. If the heavens be not founded upon and ſettled in truth, they will melt and paſs away before the fire of the Lord. There is a ſpirit that mourneth deeply to the Lord, groaning inwardly, and his ears are open to it, and he will plead the cauſe of his ſeed; and the churches and religions wherein the ſeed of the ſerpent can live and flouriſh, ſhall wither and come to an end. Duſt is already become the ſerpent's food. The ſpirit of man, in all his exerciſes of religion, knoweth not the bread of life; but the dead feed upon the dead, and the dead ſpirit of man loves to have it ſo. But this cannot continue; for the Lord hath been at work all this while; and when he brings forth the people which he hath been forming, and their religion, the religion of man will appear what it is; and ſhame and ſorrow will be the portion of all who have

have pleaſed themſelves therein, and trifled away the day of their viſitation.

Be wiſe now, therefore, O ye wiſe-ones! be religious, O ye religious ones! open the eye and ear that have been ſhut; ſhut the eye and ear that have been open: ſtumble no longer, leſt ye fall and riſe no more. I know ye cannot ſee; for the wrong eye is open, and the Lord hath deſigned to hide his wiſdom from that eye. If it be poſſible for you, become poor in ſpirit; leſt ye at laſt prove to be the rich, whom the Lord will ſend empty away. Sell all apace, that ye may have wherewith to buy the pearl. Ye have not known the appearance of the Lord; but in your wiſdom have diſdained it, and he hath diſdained to make uſe of you in this great work; but it hath been pleaſant to him to lay ſtumbling-blocks before you, that ye might fall and be broken. The children, the fools, the blind can ſee the way, and enter into life; but ye that are men, that are wiſe, that have both your eyes, that can judge in religion, and determine what is orthodox, and what erroneous, ye cannot.

O hear, that your ſouls may live! Ye know not how ſhort your time is; the day of your viſitation paſſeth away faſter than you are aware. The cry hath long gone forth, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, and his ſpouſe hath been preparing for his bed. Ye muſt off with your old garments, and have the new on. Ye muſt have the true oil in your lamps, or the door of the kingdom will be ſhut upon you, and there will be no entrance for you. In plain terms, you muſt part with all your religion which you have gathered in your own wiſdom, which hath grown up in the apoſtaſy, and which only can make a fair ſhew in the dark; but cannot endure the ſearching light of the day of the Lord; and ye muſt purchaſe the true religion, the true righteouſneſs, the true innocency and purity of Chriſt. The old muſt be done away, truly done away, and the new come in the place. So that fleſh and ſelf may be quite deſtroyed, and nothing but Chriſt found in you,

and you found no where but in Chriſt, if you enter into his kingdom; for no unclean thing can enter. Therefore put away pride, and paſſion, and enmity, and fleſhly reaſonings, and ſeek out that which is pure, and enter into it, and take up the croſs againſt all that is contrary, that ſo you may be wrought into it, and found in it. And turn from all imaginings and conceivings about the meanings of ſcriptures in the uncertain and erring mind, and come to that which is infallible. And know the ſilencing of the fleſhly part, that the ſpiritual part may grow in the wiſdom, that ſo ye may learn in the ſpirit, and know the word of God, and be able to ſpeak it.

My bowels are towards you, and in bowels hath this been written, not to anger or ſhame you, but to provoke you to jealouſy againſt that dark and evil ſpirit, which leads you to deſtruction under the guiſe and appearance of a light and good ſpirit. Nor is it to glory over you; for my ſoul lieth down in ſhame and ſorrow before the Lord, and the reproach of mine own apoſtaſy, and ſeeking relief from the world (turning from the Lord, who had wounded me, to earthly vanities for eaſe) will not eaſily be recovered.

The Lord hath been kind to me in breaking of me in my religion, and in viſiting me with ſweet and precious light from his own ſpirit; but I knew it not. I felt, and could not but acknowledge a power upon me, and might have known what it was by its purifying of my heart, and begetting me into the image of God; but I confined it to appear in a way of demonſtration to my reaſon and earthly wiſdom, and for want of ſatisfaction therein, denied and rebelled againſt it; and ſo, after all my former miſery, loſt my entrance, and ſowed ſeeds of new miſery and ſorrow to my own ſoul, which ſince I have reaped. So that I have no cauſe to boaſt over others; but to lie low in abaſement of ſpirit. And what I write is not in any dominion and authority of mine own; but to bring others into that dominion and authority which it is good for me, and for

for every one elſe, to be ſubject to. The Lord ſtrip us of our own underſtanding, and of that righteouſneſs which is but ours (though we have called it his), that ſo we may be gathered into, and receive his underſtanding, and be clothed with his righteouſneſs, and feel his reſt and peace! And happy is he that loſeth all to gain this; but he that keepeth what he hath too long, ſhall in the end loſe all, and yet not gain this neither; therefore be no longer wiſe in the eye of fleſh, or according to what man calleth wiſdom; but be TRULY wiſe.

THE
Way of LIFE and DEATH
Made MANIFEST, and ſet before MEN.

SOME POSITIONS
Concerning the Apoſtaſy from the Chriſtian SPIRIT and LIFE.

POSITION I.

That there hath been a great apoſtaſy from the Spirit of Chriſt, and from the true light and life of Chriſtianity: which apoſtaſy began in the apoſtles days, and ripened apace afterwards.

THAT the apoſtles and Chriſtians in their days had the true ſpirit, the true light, the true life, I think will not be denied. "We know "that we are of God, and that the Son of God is come, "and hath given us an underſtanding that we may "know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, "in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and "eternal life." 1 John v. 19, 20. They were truly born of God, and knew the Son of God come, receiving from him a true underſtanding, and the true light and knowledge in that underſtanding; and both the underſtanding and knowledge was rooted and ſeated in him that is true, where their ſituation and abiding was "(we are in him that is true)," where they met with the true Spirit, the true God, the true life, even life

eternal. That they had the true Spirit from God "(be- "cauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of "his Son into your hearts." Gal. iv. 6.) that they had the true light from God "(God who commanded the "light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our "hearts," &c. 2 Cor. iv. 6.) that they had the true life from and in the ſpirit "(if we live in the ſpirit, "let us alſo walk in the ſpirit." Gal. v. 25.) is generally acknowledged concerning them.

Now of an apoſtaſy from this, beginning even in their days, and to be completed not long after, the ſcriptures alſo make mention. The apoſtle Paul ſpeaks expreſly of the thing, that there muſt come "a falling away," and a revealing of "the man of ſin, the ſon of perdi- "tion." 2 Theſſ. ii. 3. Chriſt, the man of ſalvation, had ſhewed and declared the path of life; had diſcovered the true church, which was "the pillar and ground "of truth," againſt which the gates of hell could not prevail; had ſent the true ſpirit, which could "lead "into all truth," and preſerve in the truth: but there muſt ſpring up a "man of ſin, a ſon of perdition," who in a myſtery ſhould work againſt this, and cauſe a falling from this to another thing. And this the apoſtle did not only give a touch of here in writing, but he had likewiſe told them of theſe things by word of mouth, to which he refers them, verſe 5. This were enough to an eye opened; but for farther illuſtration to the thick underſtanding of man, which is ſurrounded with fogs and miſts of darkneſs, ſome more evidences of ſcriptures may be given.

Chriſt foretold of falſe prophets, Mat. vii. 15. "Be- "ware of falſe prophets, which come to you in ſheep's "clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." The Lord ſent true prophets under the law, and gave them true viſions to declare: Chriſt ſent true apoſtles and miniſters under the goſpel, and gave them the truth which they ſhould preach and propagate: but then there were falſe prophets, falſe apoſtles, and miniſters to come after, who were never ſent by Chriſt, nor never received the truth from his ſpirit. Now theſe

theſe do not come to gather into the life and truth of Chriſt, but to ſcatter from it; and ſo either to begin or uphold an apoſtaſy. And, ſaith Chriſt, beware of them; for they come very ſubtilly; they come in ſheep's clothing: they get the garment of the ſheep upon their backs, even that very garment which the ſheep did wear; but they have not the nature of the ſheep, but the nature of the wolf, which is ravenous after the life of the ſheep. Mark where there is the garment without, but not the nature within; where there is the form of godlineſs, but not the power; where there are ſcripture words and practices, but not the ſpirit of life, from which they came; there is the falſe prophet! there is the wolf! there is the apoſtate! there is the ſeducer from Chriſt.

Again, Chriſt foretels of many falſe prophets, Mat. xxiv. 11. "And many falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and "ſhall deceive many." And verſe 24, "For there ſhall "ariſe falſe chriſts, and falſe prophets, and ſhall ſhew "great ſigns and wonders; inſomuch that, if it were "poſſible, they ſhall deceive the very elect."

And as Chriſt himſelf, ſo his apoſtles alſo after him, by the ſame ſpirit, foretel of the ſame thing.

The apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of ſeducing ſpirits in the latter times, and of doctrines of devils, which ſhould prevail to cauſe a departure in ſome from the faith. 1 Tim. iv. 2. And if in thoſe days the power of ſeducers was ſo great, as to draw from the truth, which was then ſo manifeſt and living, how eaſily would it be to keep from the truth afterward, when it had been long loſt, and out of remembrance, and thereby deceit got into the place and name of it.

The apoſtle Peter alſo foretold of "falſe teachers," who ſhould "privily bring in damnable hereſies, even "denying the Lord that bought them:" and that they ſhould ſo prevail, that their "pernicious ways" ſhould be followed by many, and "the way of truth evil "ſpoken of." 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

Again, Paul, in his 2d Epiſtle to Timothy, ſpeaks of the laſt days, that the times therein ſhould be "perilous;" chap.

chap. iii. Chriſt had ſaid, " The love of many ſhould " wax cold, and iniquity abound." Mat. xxiv. 12. And Paul ſhews how the times would prove very perilous, by the abounding of iniquity. " In the laſt days " perilous times ſhall come; for men ſhall be lovers " of their own ſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, " blaſphemers, diſobedient to parents, unthankful, " unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, " falſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe " that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers " of pleaſure more than lovers of God." 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Behold what kind of fruit ſprung up from the falſe doctrine of the falſe teachers in the apoſtaſy from the truth. And yet all this under a form of godlineſs; " Having a form of godlineſs, but denying " the power thereof." verſe 5. Chriſt ſent the power of godlineſs into the world, to ſubdue the root from whence all this ſprings; to kill the evil nature inwardly: but in the apoſtaſy the evil nature is not killed, but the power denied which ſhould kill it, and the form kept up to cover the evil nature with: the inwardly ravening nature, which devours and deſtroys the ſtirrings and ſhootings-forth of the juſt-one in the heart, that gets the ſheep's clothing, the form of godlineſs, to cover itſelf with. Look any-where among the apoſtates from the apoſtles ſpirit and doctrine, and ſee; Is ſelf-love killed? is covetouſneſs killed? is boaſting and pride killed? is the love of pleaſures killed? are perſecutors and oppreſſors killed? and is your honour and glory laid in the duſt? Nay; they are but covered with the form; their life is ſtill in them; the power wherewith they ſhould be killed was at firſt denied, and now is loſt and not known. Where there is the life, there is the power; and where there is the power, the evil nature is killed. But where the evil nature is not killed, there is only a form of godlineſs, a covering, a painted ſepulchre, but rottenneſs within.

Now thoſe laſt days and laſt times were not far off, but began then: for the apoſtle exhorts Timothy to turn away from ſuch, verſe 5. " From ſuch turn away:" intimating,

intimating, that even then there were ſuch to be turned away from. And he ſaith, verſe 8. that they did then reſiſt the truth, like Jannes and Jambres; who with a likeneſs of what *Moſes* wrought, but without life, did ſtrive to reſiſt the life and power that was in Moſes. And this is the work of all deceivers, to get their own ſpirit into the likeneſs, and then to make uſe of the likeneſs to oppoſe and ſuppreſs the true life and power. So that they were come even then, when the apoſtle wrote this epiſtle to Timothy.

And Jude ſaith, that "ungodly men, turning the "grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, and denying the "only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," were "crept in" already. Verſe 4. of his epiſtle.

And the apoſtle John ſpeaks very expreſly, 1 John ii. 18, 19. "Little children, it is the laſt time; and as ye "have heard that antichriſt ſhall come, even now there "are many antichriſts, whereby we know that it is "the laſt time. They went out from us," &c. Chriſt, inſtructing his diſciples concerning the laſt times, tells them there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, with great power of deceit, Mat. xxiv. 24. Now, ſaith John here, there are come "many antichriſts, whereby we "know it is the laſt time." Mark: There were many antichriſts to begin and lay the foundation of the apoſtaſy, and make way for the great antichriſt, who was to be their ſucceſſor in the apoſtaſy, and not the ſucceſſor of the apoſtles in the truth: and theſe did not abide in the doctrines of the apoſtles, who preached "the everlaſting goſpel," nor in the ſpirit and principle which they were in; but "went out" from them, from their ſpirit (from the anointing to which they kept, and by which they were kept) into another ſpirit, and preached another goſpel; a goſpel which was not the power of God to kill the earthly, but conſiſted in ſuch a dead literal knowledge of things, as the earthly might be fed and kept alive by. And as the great antichriſt was to come, ſo theſe antichriſts who were to make way for him were already come, and were already laying the foundation of, and beginning the

the apoſtaſy. So that the ſpirit of antichriſt (that very ſpirit wherein antichriſt ſucceeded, and in which he grew up, and perfected the apoſtaſy) was then in the world, as this apoſtle ſaith yet more manifeſtly, 1 John iv. 3. "This is that ſpirit of antichriſt, whereof ye "have heard that it ſhould come, and even now "already is it in the world."

Nor was it idle, but it was at work, working itſelf into the form of godlineſs, that it might eat out the power, drive out the true ſpirit, and make a prey of the life. "The myſtery of iniquity" ſaith the apoſtle Paul, "doth already work," 2 Theſſ. ii. 7. This ſpirit did work in a myſtery of iniquity to eat out the myſtery of godlineſs, and to ſet up this myſtery of iniquity in the world, inſtead of the myſtery of godlineſs. And it did prevail to wind itſelf in the form, and get poſſeſſion of the form, and alſo to trample upon and keep under the life. It gained the "outward "court" (for when that ſpirit had corrupted, the Lord did not regard it, but gave it up to it) and it trod down the "holy city." Rev. xi. 2. And this myſtery of iniquity did not begin to work many ages after the apoſtles; but even then, in their days, *already:* "the "myſtery of iniquity doth already work."

And look now into the eſtate of the churches then, according to what the ſcripture records of them, and the ſymptoms of its working will plainly appear. The church of Epheſus (among whom ſome of the grievous wolves had entered, Acts xx. 29.) had left their firſt love, Rev. ii. 4. The churches of Galatia were bewitched from the goſpel, Gal. iii. 1. The church at Coloſs was entangled, and made ſubject to the rudiments of the world, and ordinances (which periſh with the uſing) after the commandments and doctrines of men, Col. ii. 20, 22. Mark: when once one comes to be ſubject to the commandments and doctrines of men, to periſhing ordinances, and worldly rudiments, which men teach and command, the true ſtate is loſt, and the apoſtaſy is entered into. Here the wrong teacher is teaching, and he teacheth the wrong thing, the

the wrong doctrines, the wrong commandments; and the wrong ear is hearing, which hears the wrong voice, and knoweth not the true; and so the more it heareth and practiseth, and the hotter its zeal groweth, the deeper it still runs into the apostasy. The church at Corinth also was haunted with false apostles. 2 Cor. xi. 12, 13. insomuch that the apostle was afraid lest that church should be corrupted by them, verse 3. The church in Pergamus had them that held the doctrine of Balaam, Rev. ii. 14. The church in Thyatira suffered the woman Jezebel, which called herself a propheteſs, to seduce and bring forth children in the apostasy, Rev. ii. 20, 23. The church in Sardis had a name to live; but was dead, Rev. iii. 1. having defiled her garments, verse 4. The church in Laodicea looked upon herself as rich, and increased with goods, and as having need of nothing; but was wretched, miserable, poor, blind (so then the eye was put out) and naked, wanting the gold, wanting the raiment, wanting the eye-salve, Rev. iii. 17, 18. And lastly, all the Gentiles were warned by Paul, in his epistle to the church at Rome (whereby that church might look upon herself as more particularly concerned therein) to look to their standing; lest they, falling from the faith, from the truth, from the life, into the apostasy (as the Jews had done) might also feel the severity of God, as the Jews had, chap. xi. 20, 21, 22.

Thus it is evident that the apostasy had got footing, and began to spread in the apostles days: and the apostle John, in the spirit, beholding the future state of things, sees it over-spread and over-run all: "all "nations drunk with the cup of fornication," Rev. xviii. 3. The way of truth had been evil spoken of long before, 2 Pet. ii. 2. and the rock of ages, which alone can establish in the truth, had been forsaken, and all became as a *sea*; and up gets the *beast* (which could not rise while the power of truth stood) and the *woman* upon the beast, with the cup of deceit and error from the life, in her hand; and this she gives all the nations to drink, and they drink, and are drunk with

with it. So that all nations have been intoxicated with the doctrines and practices of the apoſtaſy. They have took that for truth which the whore told them was truth, and they have obſerved thoſe things as the commands of God, which the whore told them were the commands of God. And by this means they have never come to be married to Chriſt, to be in union with him, to receive the law of life from his ſpirit, and to know the liberty from the bondage of corruption; but have been in the bed of fornication with the whore, and have pleaſed, glutted, and ſatisfied the whoriſh principle in themſelves with this fornication. And thus corruption did over-ſpread all the earth; for taking in a corrupt thing inſtead of the truth, it cannot purify the heart, but corrupt it more. A corrupt profeſſion, corrupt doctrines may paint, and make a man to himſelf ſeem changed; but the corrupt ſtill lodges within, which a ſpiritual eye can eaſily diſcern, though he that is in the corruption cannot. The Phariſees ſeemed glorious to themſelves; but Chriſt ſaw through them. And every ſort of people now, in their ſeveral ſtrains and forms of apoſtaſy, ſeem glorious to themſelves; but the ſpirit of Chriſt ſees through them all, to that which lies underneath (in whom it reigns), and there it finds corruption increaſed and ſtrengthened in its nature by the form, though outwardly painted with it. Doth not fornication defile and corrupt? ſo doth the fornication of the whoriſh ſpirit: "the earth was cor-"rupted with it," Rev. xix. 2. So that this hath been the univerſal ſtate of Chriſtendom ſince the apoſtaſy; the error, the deceit, the fornication of the whore, hath corrupted them, and with-held their eyes from the ſight of that life and truth which hath power in it to purify them. People, multitudes, nations, tongues, have been all waters: weak, unſtable, without any foundation in religion, but fit to be ſwayed and toſſed up and down with every wind or breath of the whore, of whoſe cup they had all drank, and by whoſe ſpirit they were all guided; for "the whore ſat upon them," Rev. xvii. 15. The whore, which had whored from God,

God, and so was not the true church, "sat upon peo-"ple, multitudes, nations, and tongues." She sat upon them; she had them under her; she ruled and guided them by her cup of fornication, and with her spirit of fornication, as a man would guide the beast whereupon he rides. So that all that the nations do from henceforth in religion, is under the whore, according to her guidance, by virtue of the wine that they have drank out of her cup.

And though God reserved to himself a remnant to worship him, and give some testimony to his truth all this time; yet the "beast" (which was managed by the "whore) had power over them: power to make war with them; power to overcome them, Rev. xiii. 7. The "beast" had power over all "kindreds, tongues, "and nations" every-where; to overcome the "saints," and suppress the truth they at any time were moved to give testimony to; and to set up the worship of the "beast," and make all the earth fall down before that, Rev. xiii. 7, 8. And the second "beast" had, and exercised, all the power of the first "beast," and set up his image, and gave it life, and caused men generally to worship it, Rev. xiii. 12. "And he caused all, both "small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to "receive his mark" some way or other, either in their right-hand, or in their forehead, verse 16. And such as would not receive his mark, nor worship him, he had power to persecute and kill; and he did kill them, verse 15. And the whore drank their blood, chap. xvii. 6. And God required it at her hand, chap. xix. 2. Though she made the hand of the beast execute it, and would seem to wash her own hands of it.

So that now, since the days of the apostles, even all this time of the apostasy, since the man-child hath been caught up to God, and was not to be found in the earth (which makes it seem such a strange thing for people to say Christ is in them) and the woman hath been in the wilderness, and not in the habitable part of the world, Rev. xii. 5, 6. if all this time any one will look for the true religion, for the true church, for the true knowledge

knowledge and worſhip of God, he muſt not look on any nation, or any people, or among the tongues, which are cried up in nations and people for the original, and as the chief interpreters of the original; for they are all drunk with the whore's cup: they are under the power, dominion, authority, and ſervice of the "whore," who rides upon the "beaſt," to whom "power was given over all kindreds, tongues, and nations." But look among the nations who were perſecuted, whoſe blood was drank, whom the powers of the nations made war againſt; there alone the teſtimony of Jeſus is to be found, Rev. xii. 17. There alone are the witneſſes againſt the preſent idolatry and corruption, and to ſome truths or other of Chriſt, which God enlightened them with, and whereto he ſtirred them up to give their teſtimony, though with the loſs of their eſtates, liberties, or lives.

Now, by what hath been expreſſed, is it not manifeſt to every eye that hath room but to let in the letter of the ſcripture, in ſimplicity and plainneſs, that there hath been a great apoſtaſy from the true knowledge of Chriſt, and an univerſal corruption and power of death ſprung up, inſtead of the power of his life and grace? "The grace of God, which bringeth ſalvation," hath diſappeared; and "the abomination of deſolation" hath took up its place, and filled it with deadly venom againſt the truth, and againſt the life: ſo that enmity againſt God, under a pretence of love and zeal to him, hath reigned generally in the hearts of men, from the times of the apoſtles to this preſent day. And as the light breaks forth, and their eyes come to be opened, they will ſee that they have been and are haters of God, and of his life and ſpirit; but lovers of the world, and of ſuch a religion as ſuits the worldly ſpirit.

POSI-

POSITION II.

That in this great apoſtaſy the true ſtate of Chriſtianity hath been loſt.

THIS muſt needs be; for if there was an apoſtaſy from the thing, there could not be a retaining of the thing about which the apoſtaſy was. If they apoſtatiſed from the ſpirit, from the light, from the life; then they were gone from it; they loſt it.

Now it may be inſtanced in every particular how the ſtate of Chriſtianity was loſt: but that would be too vaſt and tedious: it may ſuffice therefore to inſtance in ſome conſiderable ones, which may lead into the diſcovery of the reſt.

1. The true rule of Chriſtianity, or the rule of a Chriſtian, which is to direct, guide, and order him in his whole courſe, was apoſtatiſed from, and loſt.

What is a Chriſtian's rule, whereby he is to ſteer and order his courſe?

A Chriſtian is to be a follower of Chriſt, and conſequently muſt have the ſame rule to walk by as Chriſt had. A Chriſtian proceeds from Chriſt, hath the ſame life in him, and needs the ſame rule. Chriſt had the fulneſs of life, and of his fulneſs we all receive a meaſure of the ſame life. "We are members of his "body, of his fleſh, and of his bones, Epheſ. v. 30. Yea, we came out of the ſame ſpring of life from whence he came: "For both he that ſanctifieth, and "they who are ſanctified, are all of one; for which "cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren," Heb. ii. 11. Now what was his rule? Was it not the fulneſs of life which he received? And what is their rule? Is it not the meaſure of life which they receive? Was not Chriſt's rule the law of the ſpirit; the law which the ſpirit wrote in his heart? And is not their rule the

law of the ſpirit; the law which the ſpirit writes in their heart? How was Chriſt made a king and a prieſt? Was it by the law of a carnal commandment? or by the power of an endleſs life? And how are they made kings and prieſts to God? Rev. i. 6. Is it by the law of a carnal commandment? or is it by the power of the ſame endleſs life? "Lo, I come to do thy will, O "God," ſaith Chriſt, "when he cometh into the "world," Heb. x. 5, 7. But by what rule? By what law? "Thy law is within my heart," Pſalm xl. 8. And the ſame ſpirit who wrote it there, is alſo to write the new covenant, with all the laws of it, in the heart of every Chriſtian, from the leaſt to the greateſt, Heb. viii. 9, 10. Yea, the ſame ſpirit that dwelt in Chriſt's heart, is to dwell in their hearts, according to the promiſe of the covenant, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. This was Paul's rule, after which he walked, "The law of the "ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus," Rom. viii. 1, 2. This made him "free from the law of ſin and death." Where is the law of ſin written? Where is the law of death written? Is it not written in the heart? And muſt not the law of righteouſneſs and life be written there alſo, if it be able to deal with ſin and death? The ſpirit forms the heart anew, forms Chriſt in the heart, begets a new creature there, which cannot ſin "(He "that is born of God ſins not)." And this is the rule of righteouſneſs, the new creature, or the ſpirit of life in the new creature, Gal. vi. 15, 16. "In Chriſt Jeſus, "neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncir-"cumciſion; but a new creature. And as many as "walk according to this rule, peace be on them." Mark: There is the rule; the new creature, which is begotten in every one that is born of God. "If any "man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature;" and this new creature is to be his rule. And as any man walks according to this rule, according to the new creature, according to the law of light and life that the ſpirit continually breathes into the new creature, he hath peace; but as he tranſgreſſes that, and walks not after the ſpirit, but after the fleſh, he walks out of the light,

out

out of the life, out of the peace, into the ſea, into the death, into the trouble, into the condemnation. Here then is the law of the converted man, the new creature; and the law of the new creature is the ſpirit of life which begat him, which lives, and breathes, and gives forth his law continually in him. Here is a Chriſtian; here is his rule: he that hath not the new creature formed in him, is no Chriſtian; and he that hath the new creature, hath the rule in himſelf. "Ye have an "unction from the Holy One, and ye know all "things," 1 John ii. 20. How came they to know all things? Doth not John ſay, it was by the "unction?" The anointing was in them, a fountain or well-ſpring of light and life, iſſuing forth continually ſuch rivers and ſtreams of life within, as they needed no other teacher in the truth and way of life, verſe 27. The "Com-"forter" did refreſh their hearts ſufficiently, and led them into all truth. Search the apoſtles epiſtles, and ye ſhall find them teſtifying of the Lord's ſending his ſpirit into the hearts of Chriſtians; and exhortations to them not to grieve or quench the ſpirit, but to follow as they were led. They were to "live in the ſpirit," and to "walk in the ſpirit," Gal. v. 25. And the ſpirit was to walk, and live, and bring forth his own life and power in them, 2 Cor. vi. 16. And what can be the proper and full rule of God's ſons and daughters, but the light of the ſpirit of life, which they receive from their Father? Thus God did advance the ſtate of a believer above the ſtate of the Jews under the law: for they had the law, though written with the finger of God, yet but in tables of ſtone; but theſe have the law, written by the finger of God in the table of their hearts. Theirs was a law without, at a diſtance from them, and the prieſt's lips were to preſerve the know-ledge of it, and to inſtruct them in it; but here is a law within, nigh at hand, the immediate light of the ſpirit of life ſhining ſo immediately in the heart, that they need no man to teach them; but have the ſpirit of prophecy in themſelves, and quick living teachings from him continually, and are made ſuch kings and

prieſts to God, as the ſtate of the law did but repreſent. The goſpel is the ſubſtance of all the ſhadows contained in the law. A Chriſtian is he that comes into this ſubſtance, and lives in this ſubſtance, and in whom this ſubſtance lives; and his rule is the ſubſtance itſelf, in which he lives, and which lives in him. Chriſt is the ſubſtance, who lives in the Chriſtian, and he in Chriſt: Chriſt lives in him by his ſpirit, and he in Chriſt by the ſame ſpirit: there he lives, and hath fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, in the light wherein they live, and not by any outward rule, 1 John i. 6, 7.

But what is the rule now in the apoſtaſy?

Among the Papiſts, the rule is the ſcripture, interpreted by the church (as they call themſelves) with a mixture of their own precepts and traditions.

Amongſt the Proteſtants, the rule is the ſcriptures, according as they can underſtand them by their own ſtudy, or according as they can receive the underſtanding of them from ſuch men as they account orthodox. And hence ariſe continual differences, and heats, and ſects; one following this interpretation, another that.

And this is a grievous apoſtaſy, and the root, ſpring, and foundation of all the reſt; for he that miſſeth in his beginning, he that begins his religion without the true rule, how can he proceed aright in any thing afterwards?

Object. But are not the ſcriptures the word of God? And is not the word of God to be a Chriſtian's rule? If every one ſhould be left to his own ſpirit, what confuſion and uncertainty would this produce!

Anſw. The ſcriptures are not that living word, which is appointed by God to be the rule of a Chriſtian; but they contain words ſpoken by the ſpirit of God, teſtifying of that word, and pointing to that word which is to be the rule. "Search the ſcriptures, for "in them you think to have eternal life, and they are "they which teſtify of me; and ye will not come to "me that ye may have life," John v. 39, 40. The ſcriptures are to be ſearched for the teſtimony which they give of Chriſt; and when that teſtimony is received,

ceived, Chriſt is to be come to, and life received from him. But the Phariſees formerly, and Chriſtians ſince (I mean Chriſtians in name) ſearch the ſcriptures; but do not come to Chriſt for the life, but ſtick in the letter of the ſcriptures, and oppoſe the life with the letter, keeping themſelves from the life by their wiſdom and knowledge in the letter. Thus they put the ſcriptures into the place of Chriſt, and ſo honour neither Chriſt nor the ſcriptures. It had been no honour to John to have been taken for the light; his honour was to point to it: nor is it any honour to the ſcriptures to be called the word of God; but their honour is to diſcover and teſtify of the word. Now hear what the ſcriptures call the word; "In the beginning was the "word, and the word was with God, and the word "was God," John i. 1. "And the word was made "fleſh," verſe 14. This was the name of Chriſt, when he came into the world in the fleſh, to ſow his life in the world. And when he comes again into the world, out of a far country, to fight with the beaſt and falſe prophet, and to cleanſe the earth of the whore's fornication and idols, wherewith ſhe had corrupted it, he ſhall have the ſame name again; "his "name is called the Word of God," Rev. xix. 13. So Peter calleth that the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, 1 Pet. i. 23. And this word that liveth and abideth for ever, was the word that they preached, verſe 25. And they that believed did not cry up the words that the apoſtles ſpake for the word; but received the thing they ſpake of, "the ingrafted "word;" which being received with a meek, quiet, and ſubmiſſive ſpirit, "is able to ſave the ſoul," Jam. i. 21. This is "the word of faith" that is "nigh, in "the heart and in the mouth," Rom. x. 8. This is the word that ſtands at the door of the heart, and ſpeaks to be let in "(Behold, I ſtand at the door and "knock):" and when it is let in, it ſpeaks in the heart what is to be heard and done. It is nigh; it is in the heart, and in the mouth; to what end? "That thou "mighteſt hear it, and do it." The living word,

which is "quick and powerful, and ſharper than any "two-edged ſword," divides in the mouth, and divides in the heart, the vile from the precious; yea, it reacheth to the very inmoſt of the heart, and cuts between the roots, Heb. iv. 11. and this thou art to hear and do. Thou art to part with all vile words, the vile converſation, the vile courſe and worſhip of the world outwardly, and the vile thoughts and courſe of ſin inwardly, as faſt as the word diſcovers them to thee, and to exerciſe thyſelf in that which is folly and madneſs to the eye of the world, and a grievous croſs to thine own worldly nature; yea, when the word reaches to the very nature, life, and ſpirit within, from whence all that comes, that ſtrong wiſe root of the fleſhly life in the heart muſt not be ſpared, nor that fooliſh weak thing (to man's wiſe eye) which is brought inſtead thereof, be rejected: which, when it is received, is but like a little ſeed, even the leaſt of ſeeds; and when it grows up, it is a long while but like a child; and yet keeping in that childiſhneſs, out of the wiſdom, it enters into that kingdom which the greateſt wiſdom of man (in all his zealous ways and forms of religion) falls ſhort, and is ſhut out of. This is the word of life; this is the true living rule, and way to eternal life; and this is the obedience; this is the hearing and doing of the word. "He that hath an ear, let him hear. "Examine yourſelves whether ye be in the faith: "prove your ownſelves. Know ye not your ownſelves, "how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be repro-"bates?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Are ye in the faith? Then Chriſt is in you. Is not Chriſt in you? Then ye are in the reprobate ſtate, out of the faith. Is Chriſt in you, and ſhall he not hold the reins, and rule? Shall the living word be in the heart, and not the rule of the heart? Shall he ſpeak in the heart, and man or woman in whom he ſpeaks run to the words of ſcripture formerly ſpoken, to know whether theſe be his words or no? Nay, nay, his ſheep know his voice better than ſo. Did the apoſtle John, who had ſeen, and taſted, and handled, and preached the word of life, ſend Chriſtians

to

to his epiſtles, or any other part of ſcripture, to be their rule? Nay, he directed them to the anointing as a ſufficient teacher, 1 John ii. 17. "He that believeth "on me, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly "ſhall flow rivers of living water," John vii. 38. He that hath the fountain of life in him, iſſuing out rivers of living water continually, hath he need to go forth to fetch in water? "The kingdom of heaven is "within you," ſaith Chriſt; and he bids "ſeek the "kingdom." Light the candle, ſweep thine own houſe, ſeek diligently for the kingdom; there it is, if thou canſt find it. Now he that hath found the kingdom within, ſhall he look without, into words ſpoken concerning the kingdom, to find the laws of the kingdom? Are not the laws of the kingdom to be found within the kingdom? Shall the kingdom be in the heart, and the laws of the kingdom written without in a book? Is not the goſpel the miniſtration of the ſpirit? And ſhall he who hath received the ſpirit run back to the letter to be his guide? Shall the living ſpirit, that gave forth the ſcriptures, be preſent, and not have preeminence above his own words? What is the proper intent of the letter? Is it not to teſtify of the ſpirit, and to end in the ſpirit? The law, the prophets, John, led to Chriſt in the fleſh; and he was to be the increaſing light, when they ſhould decreaſe. Chriſt's words in the fleſh, the apoſtles words afterwards, and all words ſince, are but to lead to Chriſt in the ſpirit, to the eternal living ſubſtance; and when words of Chriſt, of the apoſtles, or any other words ſpoken from the ſame ſpirit in theſe days, have brought to the ſpirit, to the feeling and ſettling of the ſoul in the living foundation, and to the building and perfecting of the man of God therein, they have attained their end and glory. But to cry up theſe, not underſtanding their voice, but keeping at a diſtance from the thing that they invite to; the words hereby are put out of their place, out of their proper uſe and ſervice, and ſo attain neither their end nor their glory. And though man put that upon them which ſeems to be a greater

glory, namely, to make them his rule and guide; yet, it being not a true glory, it is no glory, but a diſhonour both to them and to the ſpirit, who gave them to another end.

Now for the other part of the objection, that if men ſhould be left to their own ſpirits, and ſhould follow the guidance of their own ſpirits, it would produce confuſion and uncertainty: I do acknowledge it; it would do ſo. But here is no leaving of a man to his own ſpirit ſpoken of or intended, but the directing and guiding of a man to the Word and Spirit of life; to know and hear the voice of Chriſt, which gathers and tranſlates man out of his own ſpirit into his Spirit: and here is no confuſion or uncertainty; but order, certainty, and ſtability.

The light of God's Spirit is a certain and infallible rule, and the eye that ſees that, is a certain eye; whereas man's underſtanding of the ſcriptures is uncertain and fallible; he having not the true ear, receiveth ſuch a literal uncertain knowledge of things into his uncertain underſtanding, as deceives his ſoul. And here man, in the midſt of his wiſdom and knowledge of the ſcriptures, is loſt in his own erring and uncertain mind, and his ſoul deceived, for want of a true root and foundation of certainty in himſelf. But he that is come to the true Shepherd, and knows his voice, he cannot be deceived. Yea, he can read the ſcriptures ſafely, and taſte the true ſweetneſs of the words that came from the life; but man who is out of the life, feeds on the huſks, and can receive no more. He hath gathered a dead, dry, literal, huſky knowledge out of the ſcripture, and that he can reliſh; but ſhould the life of the words and things there ſpoken of be opened to him, he could not receive them, he himſelf being out of that wherein they were written, and wherein alone they can be underſtood. But poor man having loſt the life, what ſhould he do? He can do no other but cry up the letter, and make as good ſhift with it as he can; though his ſoul the mean while is ſtarved, and lies in famine and death, for

for want of the bread of life, and a wrong thing is fed.

The Scribes and Pharisees made a great noise about the law and ordinances of Moses, exclaiming against Christ and his disciples as breakers and profaners of them; yet they themselves did not truly honour the law and ordinances of Moses, but their own doctrines, commandments, and traditions. So those now who make a great noise about the scriptures, and about the institutions of the apostles, do not honour the scriptures, or the institutions of the apostles; but their own meanings, their own conceivings, their own inventions and imaginations thereupon. They run to the scriptures with that understanding which is out of the truth, and which never shall be let into the truth; and so being not able to reach and comprehend the truth as it is, they study, they invent, they imagine a meaning; they form a likeness, a similitude of the truth as near as they can, and this must go for the truth; and this they honour and bow before as the will of God; which being not the will of God, but a likeness of their own inventing and forming, they worship not God, they honour not the scriptures, but they honour and worship the works of their own brain. And every scripture which man hath thus formed a meaning out of, and hath not read in the true and living light of God's eternal Spirit, he hath made an image by, he hath made an idol of; and the respect and honour he gives this meaning, is not a respect and honour given to God, but to his own image, to his own idol. Oh how many are your idols, ye Christians of England, as ye think yourselves to be! How many are your idols, ye gathered churches! How full of images and idols are ye, ye spiritual notionists, who have run from one thing to another with the same mind and spirit wherewith ye began at first! But the founder of images has never been discovered and destroyed in you, and so he is still at work among you all; and great will your sorrow and distress be, when the

the Lord's quick eye ſearcheth him out, and revealeth his juſt wrath againſt him.

In my heart and ſoul I honour the ſcriptures, and long to read them throughout with the pure eye, and in the pure light of the living Spirit of God; but the Lord preſerve me from reading one line of them in my own will, or interpreting any part of them according to my own underſtanding, but only as I am guided, led, and enlightened by him, in the will and underſtanding which comes from him. And here all ſcripture, every writing of God's Spirit, which is from the breath of his life, is profitable to build up and perfect the man of God; but the inſtructions, the reproofs, the obſervations, the rules, the grounds of hope and comfort, or whatever elſe which man gathers out of the ſcriptures, (he himſelf being out of the life) have not the true profit, nor build up the true thing; but both the gatherings and the gatherer are for deſtruction. And the Lord will eaſe the ſcripture of the burden of man's formings and invention from it, and recover its honour again, by the living preſence and power of that Spirit that wrote it; and then it ſhall be no longer abuſed and wreſted by man's earthly and unlearned mind, but in the hands of the Spirit come to its true uſe and ſervice to the ſeed, and to the world.

2. The true worſhip was loſt.

The true worſhip of God in the goſpel is in the Spirit. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the "true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit "and in truth; for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to wor- "ſhip him." John iv. 23. The true worſhip is in the Spirit, and in the truth, and the true worſhippers worſhip there; and ſuch worſhippers the Father ſeeks, and ſuch worſhip he accepts; but all other worſhip is falſe worſhip, and all other worſhippers are falſe worſhippers; ſuch worſhippers as God ſeeks not, nor can accept

accept their worſhip. Did God refuſe Cain's ſacrifice formerly? and can he accept any ſacrifice or worſhip now that is offered in that nature? Why he that worſhips out of the Spirit, he worſhips in that nature; but he that worſhips aright, muſt have his nature changed, and muſt worſhip in that thing wherein he is changed, in that faith, in that life, in that nature, in that Spirit whereby and whereto he is changed. For without being in this, and keeping in this, it is impoſſible to pleaſe God in any thing. He that is the true worſhipper is a believer, and in his worſhip he muſt keep to his rule, the law of faith, the law of the Spirit of Life in him, the law which he receives by faith freſh from the Spirit of Life continually. He muſt hear and obſerve the voice of the living word in all his worſhip, and worſhip in the preſence, and power, and guidance of that, as that moves, and as that carries on, or God is not worſhipped in the Spirit. I ſhall inſtance only in prayer. "Praying always "with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit." Eph. vi. 18. Mark, *all prayer and ſupplication* muſt be *in the Spirit*; yea, it muſt be *always* in the Spirit, which ſpeaks in the heart to God, and makes the interceſſion, or it is no prayer. If a man ſpeak ever ſo much from his own ſpirit, with ever ſo much earneſtneſs and affection, yet it is no prayer, no true prayer, but only ſo far as the Spirit moves to it, and ſo far as the Spirit leads and guides in it. If a man begin without the Spirit, or go on without the Spirit, this is out of the worſhip; this is in his own will, and ſo will-worſhip; and according to his own underſtanding, and ſo fleſhly worſhip; both which are to be crucified, and not to be followed in any thing under the goſpel. "We are the circumciſion, which "worſhip God in the Spirit, (here are the true wor-"ſhippers, "the circumciſion;" and here is the true "worſhip, "in the Spirit;" and they have no bounds "and limits in the fleſh, wherein their ſtrength and "confidence is broke) and have no confidence in the "fleſh." If a man addreſs himſelf to any worſhip of God

God without his Spirit, hath he not confidence in the flesh? If he begin without the moving of his Spirit, doth he not begin in the flesh? If he go on, without the Spirit's carrying on, doth he not proceed in the strength and confidence of the flesh? But the worship of the Spirit is in its will, and in its time, and is carried on by its light and power, and keeps down the understanding and affectionate part of man, wherein all the world worship, and offer up the unaccepted sacrifices, even *the lame* and *the blind*, which God's soul hates.

Now this worship, as it is out of man's will and time, and in that which continueth, so it is continual. There is a continual praying unto God. There is a continual blessing and praising of his name, in eating, or drinking, or whatever else is done. There is a continual bowing to the majesty of the Lord in every thought, in every word, in every action, though it be in worldly things and occasions; yet the Spirit of the Lord is seen there, and the tongue confesseth him there, and the knee boweth to him there. This is the true worship, and this is the rest or sabbath wherein the true worshippers worship. When the creation of God is finished; when the child is formed in the light, and the life breathed into him; then God brings him forth into his holy land, where he keeps his sabbath. They that are in the faith, which is the substance of the things hoped for under the law, are come from all the shadows and types of the law, and from all the heathenish observations of days and times in the spirit of this world, where the spirit of man is hard at work, into the true sabbath, into the true rest, where they have no more to work, but God works all in them in his own time, according to his own pleasure. "We, "which have believed, do enter into rest." Heb. iv. 3. "And he that is entered into his rest, hath "ceased from his works, as God from his," verse 10. He that hath the least taste of faith, knows a measure of rest, finding the life working in him, and his soul daily led farther and farther into life by the working of

of the life, and the heavy yoke of his own labouring after life taken off from his ſhoulders. Now here is the truth, here is the life, here is the ſabbath, here is the worſhip of the ſoul, that is led into the truth, and preſerved in the truth.

But what is the worſhip now in the apoſtaſy?

Among the Papiſts, a very groſs worſhip; a worſhip more carnal than ever the worſhip of the law was: for that, though in its nature it was outward and carnal, yet it was taught and preſcribed by the wiſdom of God, and was profitable in its place, and to its end; but this was invented by the corrupt wiſdom, and ſet up in the corrupt will of man, and hath no true profit, but keeps from the life, from the power, from the Spirit, in fleſhly obſervations, which feed and pleaſe the fleſhly nature. Look upon their days conſecrated to ſaints, and their canonical hours of prayer, and their praying in an unknown tongue, with their faſtings, feaſtings, ſaying of *Ave-Marys*, *Pater-noſters*, *Creeds*, &c. are not all theſe from the life, out of the Spirit, and after the invention, and in the will of the fleſh? Ah! their ſtink is greater than the fleſh-pots of Egypt.

And the worſhip of the Proteſtants comes too near them: for their worſhip is alſo from a fleſhly principle, and in their own times and wills, and according to their own underſtanding and apprehenſion of things, and not from the riſing up and guidance of the infallible life of the Spirit in them; for that they will quench. They alſo obſerve days and times, and periſhing ordinances, and are not come out of the fleſh into that Spirit where the worſhip is to be known, and to be in.

3. The faith, the true faith, which was loſt.

The faith which gives victory over the world; the faith which feeds the life of the juſt, and ſlays the unjuſt; the faith which is pure, the myſtery whereof is held

held in a pure conſcience; the faith which gives entrance into the reſt of God; the faith which is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen; this hath been loſt, and is not yet to be found among thoſe who go for Chriſtians.

For thoſe who challenge the name of Chriſtians, and ſay they believe in Chriſt, and have faith in him, cannot with their faith overcome the world; but are daily overcome by the world. Where is there a Chriſtian, but he is either in the honours, or in the faſhions, or in the cuſtoms, or in the worſhips of the world, if not in them all? He is ſo far from overcoming theſe, that he is overcome with them; yea, ſo overcome, ſo drunk therewith, that he hath even loſt his ſenſes, and thinks he may be a Chriſtian, and in a good ſtate while he is there.

And the life of the juſt is not fed by their faith, but the unjuſt nature is fed, and the righteous witneſs, which is raiſed up and lives by the true faith, is kept down, and cannot bring forth his life in them, becauſe of their unbelief; for that is the proper name of their faith; for being not true faith, it is not faith, but unbelief.

And the faith of Chriſtians (ſo called) is not a myſtery, (they know not the myſtery of it, which is held in a pure conſcience) but conſiſts in believing an hiſtorical relation, and in a fleſhly improving of that, and can be held in an impure conſcience.

Neither are they entered into reſt by their faith: for they know not the ſabbath in the Lord, but are ſtill in a ſhadowy ſabbath.

Neither is it the ſubſtance of what they hope for; but the ſubſtance of what they hope for is ſtrange to them. They are not come to "Mount Sion, to the "city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, to "the innumerable company of angels, to the general aſ-"ſembly and church of the firſt-born, to God the Judge, "Chriſt the Mediator, and the blood of ſprinkling," and ſo to unity and certainty in the life; but are in opinions,

opinions, ways, and practices ſuitable to the earthly ſpirit; which may eaſily be ſhaken, and muſt be ſhaken down to the ground, if ever they know the building of God, and the true faith.

4. The love, the true love, was loſt.

The innocent love, which thinks no ill, nor wiſhes no ill, much leſs can do any ill to any; but ſuffereth long, and is kind, meek, humble, not ſeeking its own, but the good of others; this love *is loſt*. The love unfeigned is baniſhed; a feigned love, ſuch a love as enmity and violence proceeds from, is got in the place of it. The true love loves the enemy, and cannot return enmity for enmity, but ſeeks the good of them who hate it: but this love can perſecute and hate that which it calls the friend, nay, the brother, becauſe of ſome difference in opinion or practice. The love that was in Chriſt, taught him to lay down his life for his ſheep; and he that hath the ſame love, can lay down his life for his brother. But the love that is now amongſt Chriſtians tends rather to the taking away of life.

What is the love amongſt the Papiſts? See their inquiſitions, their wraths, their fire and faggot, &c.

What is their love in New-England? Is it not a love that can impriſon or baniſh their brother, if he differ but a little from them in judgment or practice about their worſhip? Yea, they can whip, burn in the hand, cut off ears, juſt like the biſhops of Old England. If one had told them, when they fled from the perſecution of the biſhops here, that they themſelves ſhould have done ſuch things, they would have been apt to reply, with Hazael, What! are we dogs? But they fled from the croſs, which would have crucified that perſecuting ſpirit, and ſo carried it alive with them; and being alive, it grew by degrees to as great an head there, as it did in the biſhops here.

And

And what is the love here in Old England? Is it not a love that whips, ſtocks, impriſons, ſtones, jeers? Yea, the very teachers (which ſhould be patterns of love to others) they will caſt into priſon, and diſtrain the goods of their brother, even almoſt to his undoing, for maintenance, according to the law of the land made in the apoſtaſy. See *the Record of Sufferings for Tithes in England*, which may make any tender heart bleed to read it, and is like to lie as a brand of infamy on the magiſtracy and miniſtry of England to ſucceeding generations. Is this the love of the righteous ſeed? Or is it Cain's love, which is in profeſſion, in word, in ſhew, but not in deed and in truth? And how can theſe love God? Nay, if the true love of God were in them, this enmity could not ſtand, nor ſuch fruits of it ſhoot forth. But they have not ſeen the Father or the Son. And that life of them which appears in the earth, the evil ſpirit in man ſeeks to deſtroy, that he may keep up his own image and ſhadow of life, which the nature of the true life in its appearance fights againſt. "By this ſhall all men "know that ye are my diſciples, if ye love one an-"other." And by this may all men know, that thoſe that now go for Chriſtians are not Chriſt's diſciples, in that they do not love one another. They are not at unity in the light, and ſo cannot love one another there; but are only in unity in forms, in opinions, in profeſſions, in practices; ſo any difference there ſtirs up the enmity, cauſing riſings in the heart againſt them at leaſt, if it proceed not further. The true love grows from true union and fellowſhip in the light; where that is not known, there cannot be true love in the Spirit, but a feigned love in the fleſh.

5. The true hope, joy, and peace are loſt.

The true ground of hope is Chriſt in the heart, and the true hope is that hope which ariſeth from this ground, from the feeling of Chriſt there; "Chriſt in "you

" you the hope of glory." Col. i. 27. What is the true Chriſtian's hope? It is Chriſt in him; he " hath " eternal life abiding in him;" and he knows that cannot but lead to glory. But what is the common Chriſtian's hope? He faſtens his hope upon the relation and his belief of an hiſtory. " He that believeth " ſhall be ſaved." I believe; therefore I ſhall be ſaved. And thus, as he hath got up a wrong faith, and a wrong love, ſo he gets up a wrong hope. And this hope will periſh; for it is the hope of the hypocrite, or an hope in the hypocritical nature, which complies with ſcripture-words, but is not in union with God, nor with the life of the ſcriptures; and ſo being without the anchor, is toſſed in the waves of the ſea.

And the true joy is in the Spirit, from what is felt, and enjoyed, and hoped for there. But the common Chriſtian's joy is from things which he gathers into and comprehends in his underſtanding; or from flaſhes which he feels in the affectionate part, from a fire and ſparks of his own kindling, from whence he fetches his warmth and comfort.

And the true peace ſtands in the reconciliation with God, by having that broken down which cauſeth the wrath, and to which the wrath is, wherever it is found. The Lamb of God breaks down the wall of ſeparation in the heart; the blood of Jeſus, wherein is the life, cleanſeth away the ſin there, maketh the heart pure, uniteth the pure heart to the pure God: here is union, here is fellowſhip, here is peace; but the common Chriſtian's peace is from a miſunderſtanding of ſcriptures, while the wall of ſeparation is ſtanding, while wickedneſs lodges in the heart. They reaſon themſelves, from ſcripture words, into an apprehenſion that God is at peace with them, and that they are in union with him; while that of God which is in them, witneſſeth againſt them, and checks them, and wars with them; and they are not one with it, nor cannot be, in that nature and underſtanding wherein their life lies, to which belongs no peace.

6. The true repentance, converſion, and regeneration have been loſt.

The true repentance is from dead works, and from the dead principle whence all the dead works proceed: but theſe have not been repented of, but cheriſhed in the apoſtaſy. The praying, the ſtriving, the worſhipping, the fighting, hath been from the dead principle. The building up and whole exerciſe of religion in the apoſtaſy, hath been in that underſtanding which is to be deſtroyed; and the will, which ſhould have been crucified, hath been pleaſed and fed with its religion.

The true converſion is from the power of Satan to God, from the darkneſs to the light: but in the apoſtaſy, men have not known God or Satan, the light or the darkneſs; but have miſtook, taking the one for the other, worſhipping the devil inſtead of God, Rev. xiii. 4. and following the dark conceivings of their own and other mens minds concerning ſcripture, and calling them light.

Regeneration is a changing of man, whereby the birth is born of the Spirit; the ſtripping of the creature of its own nature, of its own underſtanding, of its own will, and forming it anew in the womb of the Spirit; ſo that the old creature is paſſed away, and comes forth a new thing, which grows up daily in the new life towards the fulneſs of Chriſt. But men have been ſo far from being born of the Spirit, that they have not ſo much as known the gift of the Spirit in them; but to this day are enemies, and at a diſtance from that of God in them, which is pure. And if they could but open their eyes, they would ſee that their birth is fleſhly, and conſiſts, at beſt, but in ſuch a conformity to the letter, as the old nature may imitate and attain; but the immortal ſeed is not ſprung up in them, nor they dead to the mortal, or alive to the immortal.

7. The

7. The true wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption are loſt.

The true wiſdom ſtands in the fear of God, and departing from evil: this thoſe that are taught of God learn, and thereby are made wiſe unto ſalvation. But moſt that are called Chriſtians are not come to the fear of God; and many are got above it, looking upon it as legal, and not appertaining to the goſpel; but the goſpel-ſtate is love, which caſteth out fear. Doth the love of God refuſe or caſt out the fear of God? Nay, it caſts out the fear that brings bondage; the fear that came in by tranſgreſſion; which fear is ſtirred up, and diſcovered by the law. And this is a fear of ſin, or a fear ariſing from ſin, through the law's manifeſtation of it, and the wrath againſt it, which cauſeth both the fear, and much bondage from the fear: and this the goſpel (which diſcovers the love, the mercy, the grace, the power, and unites to them) frees from, and caſts out. But then there is a fear of God; a fear wrought in the heart by his Spirit; a fear which is part of the new covenant ("I will put "my fear in their hearts, and they ſhall not depart "from me"); a fear which is part of the "everlaſt-"ing goſpel," Rev. xiv. 6, 7. and "endureth for "ever," Pſ. xix. 9. And this fear is not bondage, but liberty; it is indeed bondage to the unjuſt, but liberty to the juſt; for where this fear is, ſin is departed from; it ſets free; it delivers the feet out of the ſnare of iniquity; there is true liberty. Can ſin prevail in that heart, where the pure clean fear of God is placed by God to keep it down? The love of God doth not caſt out this fear, but keeps in this fear; and this fear keeps the heart clean from the evil which defiles, and preſerves the love from the enmity, which ſprings up where this fear is not. Now this fear in the apoſtaſy was loſt, or elſe what needed there an eſpecial miniſtry to be raiſed up to preach it again, Rev. xiv. 6, 7. And the eſtate of Chriſtians every

where doth manifeſt this loſs; for their hearts are not kept clean, which ſheweth that the fear (which doth keep clean where it is) is wanting in them. There is pollution, there is filth, there is deceit, there is high-mindedneſs, ſelf-conceitedneſs, and love of the world, and worldly vanities, and many other evils to be found in the hearts of thoſe that go for Chriſtians; and the purity of heart (which comes from the fear, and ſtands in the wiſdom) is not known. They are wiſe to do evil; but want the knowledge to avoid the evil, and do the good. They are wiſe to get and enjoy the world; but know not the true riches. They are wiſe to gather together many ſcripture-words againſt ſin, and yet ſtill keep the nature and life of it in the heart, and it is as a ſweet morſel under the tongue. They are wiſe to apply promiſes to comfort themſelves with (when ſometimes they receive a juſt wound in their hearts from the righteous-one); but know not that nature, or that eſtate and condition, to which all the promiſes are made; but are yet in that nature, and in that eſtate and condition, to which the curſe appertains.

The true righteouſneſs ſtands in the faith, in hearing and obeying the word of faith. How comes the righteouſneſs of the law, but by hearing and obeying the voice of the law? And how comes the righteouſneſs of the goſpel, but by hearing and obeying the Word of faith, who is preached, and the preacher of righteouſneſs, in the heart? The apoſtle Paul makes this compariſon, Rom. x. The righteouſneſs of the law ſpeaketh on this wiſe, "The man that doth theſe "things, ſhall live in them." But how ſpeaketh the Word of faith? "The word is nigh thee, in thy "mouth, and in thy heart;" he that doth that, he that heareth that, ſhall live in that. "The hour is "coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the "voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall "live." Diſobedience to the law is unrighteouſneſs, and brings death; and diſobedience to the living Word is unrighteouſneſs, and cannot be juſtified, but condemned;

condemned; and obedience to it cannot be condemned, but juſtified: ſo that when the ſoul hears, believes, and obeys, then it is juſtified; then its former ſins are forgotten, and this is imputed to it unto righteouſneſs. But when the ſoul will not hear, will not believe, will not obey, this unbelief is judged in him, and his ſins retained, and not remitted. Now is not this a juſt and equal way of juſtification, O ye ſons of men! Is not your way unequal? Shall a man continue in the unbelief and rebellion againſt Chriſt, againſt the light, againſt the faith, and yet be juſtified by Chriſt, by the light, by the faith? This cannot be; God's way of imputation will ſtand; but man's invented way of imputation, which ſprung up in the apoſtaſy, will not ſtand. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, the blood cleanſeth; but not otherwiſe. If we walk after the Spirit, and not after the fleſh, there is no condemnation; and not otherwiſe. The true baptiſm is the plunging down of the old thing, with all its filth, and the raiſing up of a new thing; and it is the new thing, the circumciſion, the baptiſm, which is juſtified. God juſtifieth his Son, and man only ſo far as he is found in his Son.

The true ſanctification conſiſts in the growth of the ſeed, and its ſpreading, like a leaven, over the heart, and over the whole man. By faith Chriſt is formed in the heart; the hidden man in the myſtery is formed there; and as this ſeed, this leaven, this man grows, ſo he makes the man holy in whom he grows. The ſeed of life, the kingdom of heaven, is an holy thing; and as it grows and ſpreads, it purgeth out the old leaven, and makes the lump new; but now, in Chriſtians that have grown up in the apoſtaſy, this ſeed is not known, this leaven is not ſo much as diſcerned; but their holineſs conſiſts in a conformity to rules of ſcripture, received into the old heart and underſtanding. And what a noiſe hath this made in the world, all this night of the apoſtaſy! as if this were the heir, and ſhould inherit the kingdom. Nay, nay; the heir hath appeared, (by whoſe preſence it is ſeen, that this

is not the heir) and ye ſhall not be able to kill him; but he ſhall live to enjoy his inheritance, and the inheritance ſhall not be yours.

Redemption conſiſts in being bought, by the price of the life, out of ſin, out of death, out of the earth, out of the power of the devil. It is a caſting off the ſtrong man out of the heart, with all that he brought in, and a delivering from his power. It is a diſſolving of the work of ſin, which the devil hath wrought in the heart, and a ſetting the ſoul, which is immortal, at liberty, free from ſin, and free unto righteouſneſs: this is the true redemption. But this redemption in the apoſtaſy is a feigned redemption, wherein ſalvation from ſin, and the devil, and his power, is not felt; but the ſtrong man is ſtill in the heart, and keeps the ſoul in death, and brings forth fruits of death daily.

The Chriſtians formerly (in the firſt day of the breaking forth of God's power) had Chriſt in them, the living Word; they opened their hearts to him, received him in, felt him there, found him made of God to them their wiſdom, their righteouſneſs, their ſanctification, their redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. They had the thing that theſe words ſignify and ſpeak of, and knew the meaning of the words by feeling of the thing. But Chriſtians now, in the apoſtaſy, have got ſeveral apprehenſions from the words, without feeling the thing the words ſpeak of; and there lies their religion. And now the true heir being come, holding forth the thing they have been all talking of, all ſects upon the earth are mad againſt him, and would fain kill him. They would not have the living ſubſtance, which is the heir, live, and nothing be eſteemed life but that; but they would have their dead apprehenſions from the words live, and their dead forms and practices owned; and the heir of life muſt come in their way, in the way that they have hoped and waited for him, or they will not own him. Awake! awake! O ye ſons of the apoſtaſy, and of the night! riſe up out of the fleſhly wiſdom, out of the dead fleſhly interpretations of ſcriptures, out of the dead

dead invented forms of worſhip, and bow to the heir; kiſs the Son, leſt ye feel the force of that dreadful ſentence, "Thoſe mine enemies, which would not "that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and "ſlay them before me." For of a truth the great prophet is riſen, and ſpeaks in the heart, and his ſheep hear his voice (there are many faithful witneſſes thereof); and he that will not hear his voice, muſt be cut off; there is no avoiding of it: for the two-edged ſword is in his hand, and he will cut down the tranſgreſſor.

8. The church, the true church, was loſt.

The true church was a company gathered out of the world into God, begotten of, and gathered into his life by, the living Word, and ſo had a true place and habitation in God. The apoſtle Paul, writing to the Theſſalonians, ſtiles them a church in God. A church under the goſpel is made up of true Iſraelites, gathered out of their own ſpirits and nature into the meaſure of the Spirit of God in them, as Chriſt was into the fulneſs. They are ſuch as are begotten of God, born of his Spirit, led by him out of Egypt, through the wilderneſs, to Sion the holy mount; there they meet with the elect precious corner-ſtone which is laid in Sion; and they, being living ſtones, are built upon it into Jeruſalem the holy city, Pet. ii. 5, 6. Heb. xii. 22. This is the true church. Every one that believes in Chriſt is a living ſtone; and being a living ſtone, he is laid upon the living foundation, and ſo is a part of the building in the temple of the living God. Yea, his body and ſpirit being cleanſed, he himſelf is a temple wherein God dwells, appears, and is worſhipped. And the gathering of any of theſe together at any time in the life, in the name of Chriſt, is a larger temple, and ſuch a temple as Chriſt never fails to be in the midſt of. But the great temple, the full church, is the general aſſembly of the

firſt-born. This is the unerring pillar and ground of truth: this always bore up truth; truth never failed here; but when it was at any time loſt in the world, it might from hence be recovered again when God pleaſed, and as far as he pleaſed. Indeed the law of the Lord hath always gone forth from this Sion, and the living word from this Jeruſalem.

But what hath the church been in the apoſtaſy? A building of ſtone, ſay ſome; and that not only among Papiſts, but here in England alſo. Many have called the old maſs-houſe a church, a temple, the houſe of God, pleading for it to be a holy place; and have ſhewed it by their practices, keeping off their hats while they were in it.

Others ſay, not the ſtone building, but the people that meet there, is the church; whereof many are openly profane; yea, ſo far from being gathered into the Spirit, and ſo ignorant of his motions, that they are ready to ſcoff, if they hear a man ſpeak of being moved by the Spirit. What are theſe? Are theſe living ſtones, whereupon the true church alone can be built? Are theſe children of the day? Nay, theſe are children of the night; children brought up in the apoſtaſy from the true light, the true life, the true rule of Chriſtianity, the true worſhip, the true faith, the true love, &c. and ſo are dead ſtones in that building; but not true living ſtones in God's building.

Other ſorts ſeparate from theſe, and gather congregations out of theſe; but ſtill in the ſame ſpirit, in the ſame nature, being not themſelves gathered out of the apoſtaſy from the Spirit into the Spirit again; and ſo they build but with the ſame ſtones as were in the old building, and not with the new and living ſtones, and ſo are but a more refined appearance of a church; but not a true church, not a church in God, and by the gathering of his Spirit; but of their own gathering, after a form, according as they have imagined from their reading and ſtudying of the ſcriptures.

9. (Which

9. (Which may be the laſt inſtance) The miniſtry, the true miniſtry, hath been loſt.

The true miniſtry was a miniſtry made and appointed by the Spirit, by the gift of the Spirit beſtowed on them, and by the Spirit ſending of them, and appointing them to their work. Chriſt bid his apoſtles and diſciples wait at Jeruſalem for the promiſe of the Spirit, and when he had given them the Spirit, he gave them to the church for the work of the miniſtry, Epheſ. iv. 11, 12. Acts xx. 28. And if none can be a member of the true church but by being begotten out of death into life by the Spirit, ſurely none can be able to miniſter to him who is ſo begotten, but by the ſame Spirit. So theſe receiving their miniſtry of the Lord Jeſus, Acts xx. 24. and the gift of the Spirit from him, they were made "able miniſters of the "New Teſtament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 6. They were able in God to miniſter from his Spirit to the ſpirits of his people; and they did not miniſter a literal knowledge of things to the underſtanding of man; but they led men to the Spirit of God, and miniſtered ſpiritual things to that ſpiritual underſtanding which was given them of God. Neither did they make uſe of their own wiſdom and art to tickle the natural ear; but ſpoke to the conſcience, with the demonſtration of the Spirit in the ſight of God, as it pleaſed the Spirit to give them utterance.

But how have miniſters been made in the apoſtaſy? By orders from men, ſet up in their own wills, after their own inventions. And how have they been qualified, but by human arts and languages, which have been of high eſteem in that which men call the church, ſince the language and ſkill of the Spirit of God hath been loſt. God, who choſe in his own church, doth not chooſe here who ſhall be his miniſters; but any man can appoint his ſon to be a miniſter, if he will but educate him in learning, and ſend him to the univerſity, and ſo bring him into that way of order wherein

wherein men make miniſters, and then he is able to miniſter unto man the things of man, according to human ſkill; and this, in the dark night of apoſtaſy, muſt go for a true call to the miniſtry of God. Indeed, they are as true miniſters as the church is to which they miniſter; but they never were, nor never can be thus made miniſters of the church of God: but as God alone can form and build his church, ſo he alone can fit and appoint the miniſters thereof. And though others, having ſeen the groſſneſs of this, make their miniſters by a call in their church; yet neither is that out of the apoſtaſy, but only a ſtriving of man to get out of it; which man cannot poſſibly do till he meet with the Spirit of God to lead out of it. So that that miniſtry alſo is but an invention of man made by man, and comes not from the Spirit, nor is able to miniſter ſpirit to the ſpirit.

Object. But hath there been no true religion ſince the days of the apoſtles? No true rule, no true worſhip, no true faith, no true love, no true hope, joy, or peace! no true repentance, converſion, and regeneration! no true wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption! no true church, no true miniſtry! What is become of all our forefathers? Did they all periſh? And hath not this miniſtry converted many to God? Were not ye yourſelves converted by it? Nay, have not many of them been martyrs, and witneſſed to the truth of God? And though ſome of them are bad, yet are not many of them zealous and conſcientious preachers of the word at this day? By ſuch reaſonings as theſe the wiſdom of man much ſtrengthens and hardens itſelf againſt the truth.

Anſw. The rule in nations, the worſhip in nations, the faith, love, hope, joy, peace, repentance, converſion, regeneration, &c. which have been cried up in nations for the truth, the churches in nations, the miniſtry in nations, all theſe have been corrupted, and never recovered their true ſtate to this day. There have been changes from one thing to another; but the reſtoration hath not been known. The whoriſh ſpirit hath

hath been hunted and purſued, and ſo run out of one form into another, traverſing her way, and changing her ground and garments; but hath not been taken and judged to the death: and the true ſpirit hath not been able to find the bed of her huſband; but hath wandered from mountain to hill all the time of this cloudy and dark day, forgetting her reſting-place.

Yet, though the whole earth was corrupted, and falſe doctrine and worſhip ſet up every-where among the nations, which continued the fornication and whoredom from the Spirit of life in the publick ways and national worſhips; notwithſtanding this, even all this while God reſerved a ſeed to himſelf, which he cauſed to ſpring up in a remnant, and which he moved and carried on to witneſs againſt ſomewhat of theſe corruptions, in their ſeveral ages and generations. And as faſt as the beaſt killed and knocked down theſe, God raiſed up more: yea, though the whoriſh ſpirit, in ſome nations, painted herſelf curiouſly, leaving ſome of the groſs doctrines and worſhips of popery, and got into a more refined way; yet God raiſed up witneſſes againſt her there alſo, and ſtill doth, into what form ſoever ſhe gets: for though of late ſhe hath decked herſelf very pleaſingly, as ſhe thinks, and covered herſelf round with ſcripture words and profeſſions, and practices as like as ever ſhe can form them to the practices of former ſaints; yet quick and lively is the Spirit of God that ſearcheth after her, who hath found her out, and raiſed up witneſſes againſt her there alſo.

Now this ſeed, this remnant, though they were not able to recover the poſſeſſion of the life and power that was loſt; yet they had a true taſte of it, and their teſtimony which they gave out from that taſte was true: and ſo far as they kept to this teſtimony in the faith and in the patience which they had learned and received from God (though but in a low meaſure) they were accepted of him. So that all were not loſt in this night of darkneſs; but ſuch as feared God, and knew and hearkened to his voice, had the teſtimony of his preſence

preſence with them, and taſted of his life and power in meaſure. God was not an hard maſter to them; but tender and gentle, and contented to reap what he ſowed. But the appearance of God in this dark time was weak and low, and eaſy to be made a prey of. And this is very obſervable, that ſo long as the ſimplicity ran pure, it was preſerved; but ſo ſoon as ever the ſpirit of man was tempted either in any old, or into any new-invented form, the wiſdom of the fleſh got in with it, grew up more than it, and when it had gathered ſtrength, corrupted the veſſel, betrayed the ſimplicity, and loſt the life. There was a precious thing ſtirring in queen Mary's days, the life whereof was more hurt and ſuppreſſed by that dead form of epiſcopacy ſucceeding afterwards, than by the foregoing perſecution. The perſecution did clear and brighten it; but the fleſhly form of epiſcopacy brought death over it. Thus many precious beginnings and buddings forth of life have been betrayed in theſe late days; and the forms of Preſbytery, Independency, and Anabaptiſm, have been little leſs than graves to bury and keep down the life. How many ſpirits, that had a precious ſavour in them at their entrance into thoſe forms, did ſoon become fleſhly, earthly, and very unſavoury, loſing the quickneſs and freſhneſs that was in them before, and falling into the deadneſs of the form, withering with it.

And as touching the miniſtry, though in itſelf it was evil, being in the degeneration from the true miniſtry all this time of the apoſtaſy, and the perſons therein, for the moſt part, very corrupt, being brought up to it as a trade, and making uſe of it as a trade; yet I do believe that there was a ſimplicity of heart in ſome perſons among them, which did cauſe them, in ſome degree of faithfulneſs, to ſeek the Lord, his ſervice, and the good of ſouls. And in the time of ignorance and darkneſs, it pleaſed God to wink at and overlook the evil, and to cauſe good to paſs from the good in them to the good in others, through the evil that hung about both. And this was the great tenderneſs

neſs of the Lord, in pity to his poor creatures, who were very deſtitute of help in the thick night of darkneſs, and ſhould not now be made uſe of to juſtify and keep up the evil. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people and unkind! becauſe his mercy and goodneſs extended to you, notwithſtanding the evil which might have hindered, will ye make that an argument to keep up the evil, and to oppoſe the light which diſcovers it? Becauſe God cauſed light to ſhine through the darkneſs, and viſited man in the dark, will ye therefore ſet up the darkneſs as his proper way of miniſtration? The corrupt way, call, and exerciſe of the corrupt miniſtry could not keep out the tender love of God; but he had reſpect to the ſimplicity of ſome who were found in it, and to the ſimplicity of others who waited on him for inſtruction there, and did pleaſe to give ſome anſwer to both. And will ye make this ungenerous uſe of it, to interpret it as his approbation of that miniſtry, which ſprung up in the apoſtaſy from him, among thoſe that were apoſtatiſed, and is a great diſhonour to him, and the abhorring of his ſoul? A miniſtry of Chriſt, a miniſtry ſet up by his Spirit, is precious; but a miniſtry made by man, according to his will, and miniſtering in his wiſdom, the ſoul of the Lord beareth as a burden, and is preſſed with it; and as he raiſeth up his own life, will eaſe himſelf of it. And what do they miniſter from, but the literal part of the ſcriptures, which killeth, and cannot give life. And what do they miniſter with, but their own underſtanding part; what meanings they can invent, what deductions their wiſdom can draw from the ſcriptures; but do not ſee the true meaning in the infallible and unerring light: and what do they miniſter to, but the underſtanding part in you? Whereas there is ſomewhat elſe to be miniſtered to by the true miniſter. And what do they miniſter to you, but food for the underſtanding; food for the ſerpentine wiſdom, which always fed upon knowledge, but never upon the true bread. And hereby another thing is fed in you, and not your ſouls; but they are kept in leanneſs

leanneſs and barrenneſs, under death and the bondage of corruption (which Paul cried out upon as a wretched ſtate, and could find no eaſe, reſt, or freedom from condemnation there), and without the true life and redemption. I do not deny but ye may there meet with ſome kind of warmth in the affectionate part, which may be heated by a fire and ſparks of man's kindling and blowing up; and this may go for life with you now: but in the preſence of the truth, where the eye is open, it vaniſheth; yea, the Spirit of the Lord hath ſo blown upon it, that it is even withered in the ſight of a more inferior eye in many people.

POSITION III.

That there is to be a recovery, a true recovery, out of this ſtate of apoſtaſy, into the true ſtate of Chriſtianity again.

GOD will not let the deſolations of Sion remain for ever; but he will again "build up Sion, and "appear in his glory." He will ſet his "king upon "his holy hill of Sion. The new Jeruſalem ſhall "again come down from heaven. The man-child," which was taken up, "ſhall come down again, con-"quering, and to conquer; and the lamb ſhall get "the victory" over the whore, and over all her apoſtatiſed nations and churches, that have a name and not the life; and he ſhall "rule them with a rod of iron," and make them a deſolation, which have made his holy city deſolate, and trample them down which have trampled upon it. "The lofty city he will lay low; "he will lay it low, even to the ground: he will "bring it even to the duſt: the foot ſhall tread it "down, the feet of the poor, the ſteps of the needy." The whore ſhall be judged, with the beaſt whereupon ſhe rode. The life, which they trod upon, ſhall riſe up in the mighty power of the Lord, and overturn them. "The everlaſting goſpel ſhall be again preached

"to

" to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation " and kindred, and tongue and people," Rev. xiv. 6. Mark: the goſpel that was preached to the nations all the time of the apoſtaſy, was not the everlaſting goſpel; that goſpel did not bring life and immortality to light; but they were hid from mens eyes, and men had only a ſound of words inſtead of the thing. And thus poor nations, kindreds, people, tongues, were every-where bewitched with a form of things; with an outward knowledge, a periſhing knowledge in the periſhing part; a vain, traditional, invented worſhip, which ſtands in the wiſdom and will of man; but had no union and fellowſhip with that which is everlaſting. And thus all the nations, in the ſmoke of the bottomleſs pit, ran into the pit from whence the ſmoke came. But the Lord hath a time to pity the poor nations, and to ſend forth his true everlaſting goſpel again, to deliver the nations from that witchery, and ſorcery, and ſpiritual inchantment which got up in the dark. And as this everlaſting light ſprings up, then down goes Babylon; down go all invented doctrines, all invented forms, all invented worſhips, and that wiſdom and evil ſpirit that raiſed them up. " Babylon is fallen, " is fallen! that great city! becauſe ſhe made all na- " tions drunk of the wine of the cup of her fornica- " tion," Rev. xiv. 8. And now the new wine of the kingdom, which is taſted of in the everlaſting goſpel, purges out the old wine; and the drunkenneſs, which thereby came upon the nations, waſtes. And they that have taſted of this life, and know this life, can never be bewitched back again, by the whoriſh ſpirit, to dead forms and likeneſſes without life. Nay, when Babylon falls, ſhe can riſe no more. Though the life fall often, it can riſe again; but when the witchery from the life is diſcovered and caſt into the pit, it can get out no more. Indeed the beaſt hath had all the ſtrength of the nations, and the whore hath had all the wiſdom, all the eſteem, all the honour. Who can make war with the beaſt? Who can ſhew miracles and wonders like the falſe prophets? Who can teach but the

the wife, learned, orthodox men, that have the arts, and know the original? Yea, there is another that can make war, and a prophet that can preach better than they; one that can preach life; one that can preach the everlasting gospel, and knows the original of it; one that is wiser and stronger than the whore, and by his wisdom and strength is able to judge her, and cast her out of the nations, though she has got very strong possession, Rev. xviii. 8. Now learn wisdom; "know "the parable of the fig-tree;" come to the life that is arisen, and abide not in the death that is passed and passing away. Ye have heard the voice of the whore, ye have drank of her cup, ye have been bewitched, ye have set up her inventions; but have wanted the thing which cannot be invented, and which the inventing understanding cannot comprehend. But if the force of the wine shall remain upon you, so that ye cannot hearken after, or let in that which is everlasting, assure yourselves, as the life rises, ye will meet with plagues and wraths from it, instead of the refreshments it brings to others; and know what it is to sit down under the dead talk of, without feeling, the living power of redemption. Therefore be wise, and know the times and seasons. That will not be borne with now, which was borne with formerly; but as the love and power of God to salvation have more appeared, so the severity against those who now resist will appear more also; and death shall have its sting, which they that will love darkness, and hate the light, shall feel.

POSITION IV.

That they that are in those things which have been set up in the times of the apostasy, are not yet come to the recovery from the apostasy.

THEY that are in the doctrines and bodies of divinity which have been formed since, are not in the true doctrine.

They

They that are in the rules of life which wife church-men, or ſynods, or councils have given, or which they themſelves have gathered by their induſtry out of the ſcriptures, are not in the true, living, and ever-laſting rule. They that are in the worſhip, or under the miniſtry, or of any church which hath been ſet up ſince by the power of man, or from the inventing wiſdom (though this wiſdom hath founded its inventions upon the ſcriptures) are not in the true worſhip, in the true church, or under the true miniſtry. They that are in the faith, which has ſince been gathered into the underſtanding, and did not ſpring up from the myſtery of life in the heart, are not in the true faith. The ſame may be ſaid of love, hope, joy, peace, and all the reſt mentioned before; yea, and all other things in religion; for all hath been corrupted, even the inward part. And while here hath been a great contention about the forms of worſhip and church-government, the power of godlineſs, and the government of Chriſt in the heart, have been loſt.

Obſerve diligently what we have now to ſay. When the apoſtles, who had the true miniſtry, preached the goſpel, they ſtirred and raiſed up the power of God in the heart; and the power of ſin, corruption, and deceit ſunk down, and was under foot, and trampled upon by the power. But when antichriſt and the falſe prophets aroſe, they raiſed up the corruption again, and fed it with doctrines of deceit; but the power ſunk down, and was not felt; but buried all that time of the prevailing of the corruption and deceit. Now the power was not loſt all this while in itſelf; but only loſt to man, ſo that he knew not where to find it. Yet this power, in this time of loſs, did ſtir and move, and make them in ſome degree ſenſible of the loſs, cauſing them to pant and ſeek after the living truth. And this was good; this was of God. But then there was an evil ſpirit, which was near to the good, and lay lurking in the ſerpentine wiſdom of the heart, and that drew the mind (which was bent toward the ſeeking of a right thing) a wrong way, that cried, *Lo here!*

here! lo there! look into the ſcriptures; the church was ſo and ſo; go, get into ſuch a thing; the Chriſtians there did ſo and ſo; go, do ſuch a thing; there is the way; there thou ſhalt meet with the life and the power. And thus it drew from that which ſtirred within, into an imitation of a form without, and there they came to a loſs. I dare appeal to all honeſt hearts, was there not a good thing ſtirring in you, when ye went into your church forms? Were ye not led in ſimplicity, hoping to meet with life and power there? Nay, did ye not loſe it there, and become deader? Did ye meet with the life and power there? I know, if ye have not forgotten the taſte of life, ye will confeſs to me, that that which now ye have is not life, but far ſhort of that which ye had when ye entered into your form. Ah! poor hearts, the whore bewitched you. The harlot in your boſoms, and the falſe prophets without, helped to increaſe the witchery, crying, Lo here! and lo there! but ye knew not that the kingdom of heaven was within; from whence that ſtirring of life was in you, where ye ſhould have kept, and not have gone forth: but now ye are dead, and buried in your graves, lying there without ſenſe, and are now got into the ſpirit of the world, and into the enmity againſt that life in others, which was then your life. And do ye know where ye are, and what ye are doing? Can ye bear to hear it?

Of a truth ye are in the ſnare of the enemy, in the inchantment from the life, in the whore's bed, in the ſtrumpet's boſom, and not in the boſom of our beloved. And your practices are branches of the fornication, parcels of the whoredom, inventions which have been gathered in by that underſtanding, and ſet up by that will, which whored from God. They are the effects and products of the whore's cup, which gets new dreſſes, new habits, new forms, new ways to cozen and deceive the ſimple with; but ſtill ſhe remains the whore, and thoſe who are ſeduced by her are led into her whoredom. For when God diſcovers and hunts her out of one form, then ſhe decks herſelf with another,

another, perhaps more ſeemingly ſpiritual, more ſcripture-like, and ſo more likely to take with the ſimple heart; and then ſhe lies in wait for the young man to entrap him again, ſaying, Come in hither; this is the true way of God without doubt. Did not the ſaints meet with life here formerly? Come thou hither alſo. Here is the bed of thy beloved; take thy fill of life, thy fill of love. And thus the poor, honeſt, ſimple heart follows her, going like a fool to the correction of the ſtocks, not knowing that it is for his life, until he come to feel the loſs of life. And then, if ſhe find ſhe cannot keep him there, but freſh ſtirrings of life ſpring up in him again, and withdraw him from that which had deceived him, then ſhe paints again, and lies in wait for him again, to catch him in ſome more refined appearance, or in ſome elevated notion, or at leaſt in the ſhadow of that which is true: for the whore hath not only art and power to invent forms and likeneſſes of that which is true, and makes idols and images of them; but it hath power alſo given it over the outward court; ſo that that which is found there it can make idols and images of; that which is corruptible, it can get into and corrupt, and make an enemy to that life which lived in it before it was corrupted; and when it is corrupted, then there is no more truth or life to be found there, but the idol and the idolatry.

The apoſtle John, who forewarned of antichriſt, and gave a mark whereby it might be known, namely, by his not confeſſing Chriſt come in the fleſh, 1 John iv. 3. (which he that ſetteth up any thing of the old covenant, or any invention or imitation of any thing therein, doth not) bids alſo beware of idols: "Little children keep yourſelves from idols." 1 John v. 21. Now what is an idol? The apoſtle Paul ſaith, "An idol is nothing in the world." An idol is no true thing in its place; but a falſe thing ſet up inſtead of the true. A falſe conception of God in the mind is an idol; a falſe church or temple is an idol; a falſe miniſter, who is not made according to the appoint-

ment of God, and by the gift of his Spirit, but came in another way, by the appointment of man, is an idol ſhepherd; and the worſhip in this church, and by this miniſtry, is publick idolatry; and all the worſhip in families, which has been erected after the ſame manner, without the guidance of the Spirit of God, is private idolatry. Were the heathens temples, altars, prieſts, ſacrifices, and other inventions of theirs (in imitation of the Jews) idolatrous? And are not the inventions of the heatheniſh ſpirit, or antichriſtian nature in man, are not they alſo idolatrous?

Object. But is praying idolatry, preaching idolatry, ſinging idolatry, baptizing of infants idolatry, breaking of bread idolatry?

Anſw. The praying which God appointed is not idolatry: praying in the Spirit of God, when he moves, and according to the will of God, which is only known in the Spirit, is not idolatry; but thy praying in thine own ſpirit, and at thine own times, and according to thine own will (perhaps in way of imitation of the Jewiſh morning and evening ſacrifices) this is idolatry. This is that which thou haſt ſet up, inſtead of that which God ſet up; and ſo it is not the true thing which God ſet up, but an idol of thy own making; and ſo thou worſhippeſt not God therein, but that ſpirit which helped thee to invent and ſet up the idol. The ſame might be ſaid concerning preaching, ſinging, waſhing with water, breaking of bread, and whatever elſe is practiſed in religion upon theſe terms.

Object. But doth not the ſcripture mention theſe things? And did not the ſaints practiſe theſe things? Surely they were not idolaters! Can I be an idolater in practiſing that which they practiſed?

Anſw. Nay, thou art miſtaken; they are not the things which they practiſed. The ſtreſs of their religion lay in the life of it, in the preſence of the Spirit of God in it: it was his breath made it the truth. Now, if thou couldſt have the ſame things that they had, yet without the ſame living breath, they would be

be but dead things; but idols. But thou haſt not the true form of things neither; thou haſt not the true church, the true miniſtry, the true ordinances, according to the form; but things ſet up in their ſtead, by the invention of man, in the time of the apoſtaſy from the true things; and what can theſe be but idols?

"The world wondered after the beaſt; and they "worſhipped the dragon, which gave power unto the "beaſt, and they worſhipped the beaſt." Rev. xiii. 3, 4. Behold, what was worſhipped at the time of the apoſtaſy! that which aroſe from the beaſtly invention of man, and not from the true Spirit of life. And the inventing and ſetting up of theſe, and worſhipping according to theſe inventions, is worſhipping the dragon (for he getteth in, and lodgeth in man's inventions), and not the living God. And therefore God, at the end of this apoſtaſy, raiſeth up a new miniſtry, to recall the nations from worſhipping the dragon to the worſhip of God again, ver. 6, 7. of that chapter, "What "the Gentiles ſacrificed" of old, "they ſacrificed to "devils, and not to God." 1 Cor. x. 20. And what the late Gentiles ſacrifice (I mean Chriſtians in the heatheniſh nature, Chriſtians to whom the outward court was given, Rev. xi. 2. and who have a profeſſion of the ſaints words and practices, but without life) they ſacrifice not to God neither; but to that ſpirit that helped them to invent and form a likeneſs or image of the truth. Tranſgreſſing the principle of God within, they go from God, and from his worſhip; and the devil, who went out from the truth, gets in, and they go into his power; and whatever they perform in worſhip there, is to him; for when they go from the principle of God in them, the devil gets into their hearts, and God goes out; and his true life, power, and worſhip are not known, but an image or likeneſs, which the devil ſets up inſtead of the true thing. So then, in that ſtate, let men conſider what they worſhip; for there they cry up ordinances and duties, and kill one another about them, thinking that they worſhip and honour God thereby; but know

not, nor are come to, that wherein God alone can be worſhipped and honoured.

" I know the blaſphemy of them, which ſay they " are Jews, and are not, ſaith the Spirit." Rev. ii. 9. Is this blaſphemy? For a man to call himſelf a Chriſtian, who is not, what is that? To call that a church, which is not, what is that? To call him a miniſter of Chriſt, who is not, what is that? To call thoſe the ordinances of Chriſt, which are not, what is that? To call that faith, which is not, that juſtification which is not, &c. what is that? Can ye ſpy out the blaſphemer? Ye have made a great outcry again him long; are ye willing now he ſhould be put to death? The Lord hath lighted his candle; he is ſearching for him, and he will find him out: and as we have deſired, ſo it ſhall be; the Lord will not ſpare him. O be awakened, be awakened, ye heatheniſh Chriſtians! Open the eye that can ſee, and behold where ye are, and what ye are doing, and how faſt ye are running into the pit. Ye have forgotten God; ye have loſt the true line of judgment; ye have loſt the key of knowledge; and the light that is in you is darkneſs, and leads to darkneſs, though ye cannot poſſibly believe it. Oh! come back to the remembrance of God, and to true holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee him. For the wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God; and ye have forgotten him days without number.

POSITION V.

That the only way of recovery out of the apoſtaſy is by returning to, and keeping in, that Spirit from which the apoſtaſy was.

THE apoſtaſy came by leaving the Spirit of God, and running after another ſpirit; and the recovery muſt be by leaving that other ſpirit, and returning to the Spirit of God again. How did Chriſtians

tians formerly begin their religion? They began in the Spirit, Gal. iii. 3. And so they were to go on to perfection, and not to intermix any thing of the flesh. And had the anointing been kept to, antichrist and the mystery of iniquity had been kept out; and where that is returned to, the antichristian spirit is purged out by degrees, and the ways thereof discovered and forsaken. Therefore know the whorish spirit in thyself, which is busy to form likenesses in thy mind to seduce thee, and to make thee fall in love with the likenesses which she hath formed in other mens minds, and let her not deceive thee with her paint and gaudy appearances; but know likewise the little seal of life, from which truth springs up in thee, and in which the Spirit of Truth dwells, and is to be found; and take heed, lest the serpentine wisdom teach thee to despise and turn from it. From this spring it was that truth sprung up in the witnesses all the time of the apostasy; for they had their testimony from the *Spirit of prophecy*, Rev. xix. 10. So far as they kept to that, they gave a true testimony; so far as their own spirits mixed with it, they corrupted it. But to abide in that was very hard; and there was need of much affliction and persecution to keep the flesh down, and to preserve the life pure. But as the life springs up more strongly, and overcomes that spirit inwardly, (I mean the wise fleshly spirit) there will be less need of outward afflictions or persecutions; yea, or inward either: but there will be a safe entrance into, and abiding in, the joy, the rest, the peace, where the whore within (which seduced from the life, where the power is, into some form where the power is not) is burnt. Learn then, and know in thyself that Spirit of prophecy which spoke in all the martyrs. Hear that, come to that, keep to that; feel the union, the fellowship, the spreading of that in thee. When that bids thee go, go; when that bids thee come, come; when that bids thee do this, do it. But the flesh is grown strong, and strongly resisteth this Spirit, both inwardly and outwardly; and will not suffer him to rise up in the

heart, or to riſe up in the nation; but at any time when he ſtirreth, and offers to ſpeak, or lead to God, there is a reaſon riſes up in the fleſhly wiſdom that knocks him down, and denies his voice, and hearkens to another voice inſtead of his. Thus they firſt give way to the fleſhly wiſdom, and ſuppreſs the truth in themſelves, and then they would go forth and ſuppreſs it in others; and they think them mad, and their rage riſeth againſt them where the truth is ſuffered to grow, and man's reaſon or fleſhly wiſdom denied. And thus is the "Lord of glory" evilly intreated, and ſlain at this day by this generation of Chriſtians, as he was by the Jews ſlain formerly in the prophets, in that his appearance in a fleſhly form, and in his apoſtles: and his blood will be required; for the earth ſhall not always drink it up and cover it, nor the adulterous woman be always able to wipe her mouth, and ſay, ſhe hath done no wickedneſs. Ye have ſaved alive the unjuſt, and killed the juſt. The murdering nature is alive in you, O ye Chriſtians; but the Holy One is ſlain, and lies buried in your graves: and ye have painted your graves, and ſpeak good words of him; but ſtill keep him down, and let another riſe up and live in you. Ye cry up that appearance of Chriſt in the fleſh, and the words he then ſpoke, and the words of his apoſtles, and think if ye had lived in thoſe days, ye would not have killed either him or his apoſtles; and yet ye reſiſt and oppoſe the ſame life in yourſelves and in others, with ſuch a kind of wiſdom in the letter as the Phariſees had. O what will ye do! the uncircumciſed ear is got up in you, and ye cannot hear; and the uncircumciſed heart, and ye cannot underſtand; but when this is told you, ye deſpiſe and wonder, and go on in the periſhing ſtate. My bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my bowels! O England! England! thou that killedſt the martyrs in queen Mary's days; thou that perſecutedſt the Nonconformiſts afterwards; thou that wouldſt not ſuffer the people of God to meet together, to ſeek him with an honeſt heart; but wouldſt confine them to thy groſs formal

formal ways of worſhip! though the Lord hath appeared, and broken the horns of the oppreſſors; yet the perſecuting ſpirit is not broken in thee; but thou ſtill hunteſt after the precious life of the ſeed, and wouldſt not let it ſpring up in the nation. The ſpirit of enmity is ſtill up in thee, which knows not the Lord of life; but by a natural inſtinct oppoſeth him, and would fain keep up ſome grave or other, it cares not what, ſo it might but thereby keep down the life: for thou canſt now bear with any form, and cheriſh it; and thy only enmity is againſt thoſe who are ſent by the Lord to gather out of all forms into the life. How often would the Lord have gathered thee! but thou wouldſt not: and yet ſeeks to gather thee; but ſtill thou wilt not: but, as if the former laws, made in queen Mary's days, were not ſufficient, deſireſt new laws, to inſnare and entangle the innocent. What will become of thee, or what wilt thou ſay to the Lord, when he ariſeth to plead the cauſe of the innocent? For that Spirit which he raiſed up to witneſs againſt the whoriſh ſpirit (which lies hid in thy forms of worſhip and religion, and appears in all thy laws, councils, and ways of government, ſo far as they were formed, and ſo far as they are guided, by the wiſdom of the fleſh) is innocent: even as that Spirit which witneſſed formerly againſt popery and epiſcopacy was innocent before the Lord, though accuſed by them as guilty of error in itſelf, and of diſturbance to the publick peace, as this is now by thee.

SOME

SOME PRINCIPLES

Guiding out of the APOSTASY,

To the CHRISTIAN SPIRIT and LIFE again.

1. *THAT there is no salvation but by the true knowledge of Christ.* The Jews had received the ordinances of God, and knew of the Messiah to come, and believed it, and were very zealous in their worship, in observation of circumcision, the passover, new moons, and sabbaths, &c. ("Wherewith shall I come "before the Lord, and bow myself before the high "God?") and yet God complains of them by his prophet, "My people perish for lack of knowledge." And the state is the same under the antichristian apostasy, wherein the whore hath made all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages drunk with the cup of her fornication. The true knowledge and worship have been lost; though the eyes of them that have been in the apostasy, and drunk with the cup, could not see it, no more than the Jews could in their day. But to come close to the thing.

The knowledge of Christ is not literal, traditional, or fleshly, nor can it be received by the natural understanding; but it is spiritual, and the understanding must be given by God which receives it. "He hath "given us an understanding, that we may know him "that is true." 1 John v. 20. A man may read scriptures, hear sermons, &c. and thereby gather a knowledge into the old understanding: but neither this understanding into which the knowledge is gathered, nor the knowledge itself which is gathered, is spiritual, but fleshly, and so cannot save. He that comes once to receive an understanding from Christ, and to have the knowledge of Christ poured forth from

from Chriſt into his heart, knows the difference between that and the underſtanding into which he gathers things. The knowledge of Chriſt after the letter (and a faith in him anſwerable to ſuch knowledge) will not ſave: but a man muſt know him in that Spirit, life, and power wherein he lived, if he groundedly hope to be ſaved by him, 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.

2. *That Chriſt ſaves by the new covenant:* not by any thing got into the mind by the oldneſs of the letter; but by a life begotten, which is new. There are two covenants made mention of in ſcripture, one whereof is called the old, the other the new. The old belonged to the Jews, which is done away, with their ceremonies, ſtate, and polity. The new, which is better than the former, Chriſt is the Mediator of, Heb. viii. 6. By mediating between God and the creature, or by bringing them together in, and according to, this covenant, he ſaves. Man, by his diſunion and diſtance from God, periſheth: by being brought again to God, he lives again; which thing Chriſt effecteth by the new covenant. So then he that is not led by Chriſt into that covenant, is not in the ſtate of ſalvation.

3. *That the new covenant is written in the heart*; or there is no other way of coming into the new covenant, whereof Chriſt is High-prieſt and Mediator, but by having the laws of God written in the heart. "This "is the covenant, &c. I will put my laws into their "minds, and write them in their hearts, &c. They "ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every "man his brother, ſaying, know the Lord: for all "ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt." Heb. viii. 10. 11. He is ſpeaking of the covenant whereof Chriſt is Mediator, ver. 6. which he calls a new covenant, ver. 8. and ſaith it is not like the old, ver. 9. inſtancing in two main particulars, wherein it is very unlike. 1. The old was written outwardly in letters, to be read by the outward eye; but this is written inwardly in the heart and mind, and ſo can only be read by a ſpiritual eye. 2. Under the old they needed teach-

teaching from men; the prieſt's lips were to preſerve knowledge, and they were to ſeek the law at his mouth; but now they ſhould have the law ſo near them, ſo clearly written in them, that they ſhould need none to teach them. From the law is the knowledge of God; the law is in the heart; and from the law in the heart ſprings up the knowledge of God in the leaſt and in the greateſt that are within this covenant, that they need not ſay, Know the Lord. This is the ſtate of the new covenant, which the Chriſtians came to in theſe days, 1 John ii. 27. But it hath been a ſtrange thing in this dark night of apoſtaſy, and is yet a ſtrange thing to many. But let ſuch conſider, Can a man be a Chriſtian, and be out of that covenant whereof Chriſt is the Mediator? Can a man be brought back again to God by Chriſt, and yet be out of that covenant whereby Chriſt brings back men to God? O how hath Satan deluded poor ſouls in this thick night of darkneſs, to make men believe they have faith in Chriſt, and ſhall be ſaved thereby; while they are quite ignorant of, and ſtrangers to, that covenant whereby Chriſt the Mediator ſaves. "They "ſhall all know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt." Mark: there is not the leaſt in this covenant but hath the law ſo written in his heart, that he need not ſeek out for knowledge.

4. *That the Spirit of God alone can write the covenant in the heart*; or that Chriſt writes the covenant by his Spirit. Man, by all his wiſdom, cannot attain it. Man is driven out from God, and cannot find the way back again to him, without the teachings and leadings of God's own Spirit. It is not the being educated in any way of religion from one's childhood, or the leaving of that, and running into any ſect afterwards, that will avail any thing hereto; but the alone hearkening to the true voice of the true Spirit. It is written in the prophets concerning the children of this covenant, that they ſhall be all taught of God: "And all thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord." It is the Lord alone, who by his Spirit teacheth them

to

to come to Chriſt, and to receive the new covenant into their hearts from Chriſt: for man is in an incapacity to know or receive Chriſt, or his covenant, until the Spirit hath fitted and taught him, John xiv. 17. But when he hath prepared and fitted his heart, then with his own finger he writeth the pure law of the nature and life of Chriſt therein; by the receipt whereof he cometh out of his own dark ſpirit and nature into the true knowledge of God, and union with him. "I "will put my Spirit within you," Ezek. xxxvi. 27. This is part of the covenant, and indeed that part whereby all the reſt is wrought.

5. *Therefore, the firſt proper ſtep in religion, is to know how to meet with God's Spirit.* There is no progreſs, no true progreſs, to be made in the true religion, till a man comes into the covenant; and there is no coming into the covenant but by the Spirit: therefore the firſt thing that is abſolutely neceſſary to be known in religion, is the Spirit, his writing, or at leaſt his motions and ſtirrings, in the heart. It may further be evidenced thus: all things in religion, acceptable to God, flow from the Spirit: all knowledge is to come from him; for he alone hath revealed and can reveal truth, and is appointed by Chriſt to lead into all truth. All worſhip is to be offered up in him: they that worſhip the Father, muſt worſhip him in the Spirit and in the truth; for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him; but rejecteth all other worſhippers and worſhip, how glorious ſoever their worſhip may ſeem to them: particularly praying is always to be in the Spirit, Epheſ. vi. 18. Jude 20. ſo ſinging, &c. yea, the whole life and converſation is to be in the Spirit, Gal. v. 25. The mortifying of all corruption is to be done by the Spirit. "If ye, through the Spirit, "mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live." Rom. viii. 13. Indeed a Chriſtian is nothing, and can do nothing, without the power and preſence of the Spirit of God in him. So then, if nothing in religion can be done (with acceptance to God) without the Spirit, then the Spirit is the firſt thing to be looked after, by him

him who would be truly and well-groundedly religious.

6. *The firſt way of meeting with the Spirit of God, is as a convincer of ſin.* Here is the true entrance; this is the key that opens into life eternal; he that can receive it, let him. It is not by ſoaring aloft into high imaginations and forms of worſhip; but by coming down to this low thing. This is the firſt and moſt proper work of the Spirit of God toward fallen man, whereby he makes way toward the writing of God's law in the heart; namely, to convince of ſin. And where ſhould man look firſt to meet with him, but in his firſt work upon him? When Chriſt promiſed the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, he ſaid this concerning him, "that he ſhould convince the world of ſin." John xvi. 8. They who are created a-new in Chriſt, and become his diſciples, receive comfort from the Spirit; but what is he to the world? Or how may they feel any operation of him? Why he is to them a convincer of ſin, and they may find him checking them for, and convincing them of, their ſins. So that the great work for man, while he lies in the darkneſs (for when he is tranſlated into light he will be eaſy) is to diſtinguiſh the movings and ſtirrings of the Spirit of God. And this is the beſt way for man in this ſtate to know them by: that which diſcovers that which is evil, THAT is good. That which diſcovers that which is ſpiritually evil, THAT muſt needs be ſpiritually good; for evil is darkneſs, and cannot make itſelf manifeſt. That which diſcovers that which is undoubtedly pure, and inclines to it, THAT muſt needs be of God. Now to know this, and be joined unto it, is a joining of the creature unto God, by ſomewhat of him that comes from his Spirit, and ſo is a true beginning of life eternal.

7. *That whereby the Spirit of God convinceth of ſin, is his light ſhining in the conſcience.* Fallen man is darkneſs; the light ſhines in the darkneſs, and ſhews man the evil, which otherwiſe would lie covered in him. Man fell from God, loſt the image of God, and became

came wholly darkneſs; but the Spirit of God is light, and ſhines in the darkneſs, and ſtrives with man to reduce him back again to that light from which he fell. "God, who commanded the light to ſhine out "of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to give the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God," &c. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Where did the apoſtles and Chriſtians in thoſe days meet with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Chriſt? God ſhined in their hearts. He that made the light to ſhine out of the dark deep, Gen. i. 2. by his Spirit, he by the ſame Spirit made the light of the knowledge of life ſhine in their dark hearts; and there it is alſo that the work of conviction is wrought by the ſame Spirit. He that perfects the good work in the heart, the ſame is he that begins it there; and his beginning is, by reproving and convincing of ſin, and ſo turning the heart from it unto God, and unto the obedience of that righteouſneſs which he makes manifeſt. And he that meeteth not with the Spirit in the beginning of his work, or ſlinketh back, and goeth not on with him, but ſmothereth his reproofs, not forbearing that, or parting with that for which he is reproved, is never like to meet with him in the end. And then it will be too late for him to blame that religion wherein there was only a dead form, but not the living power of God. He that will come to life eternal, muſt be tranſlated out of his dead underſtanding, and all his dead ways and worſhips, which pleaſe that underſtanding, into a living principle, and keep in that principle; and then he ſhall know life indeed, and the true food of that life, and the true worſhip and ſervice from that life, and the reward belonging to all.

8. *That this light convincing of ſin, ſhineth in every conſcience.* "He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is "good." Micah vi. 8. "The life," which was in Chriſt, was "the light of men." John i. 4. Chriſt is "the light of the world." John viii. 12. God, as he loved the world, ſo he manifeſted his love to the world, by ſending his light into it, to enlighten every man

man that cometh into the world, that with the light they may see his Son; and as many as receive him, to them he gives power to become the sons of God. As God would have "all men to be saved, and come "to the knowledge of the truth;" so he hath given that light to all, which may bring to the knowledge of the truth which saveth. He is "the true light, "which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the "world." John i. 9. "The grace of God, which "bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men," &c. As the enemy got possession of every man's heart, by filling it with darkness; so Christ pursueth, and seeketh to dispossess the enemy, by the light which he sendeth after him into every man. And this is the condemnation of man: not that he wants a light to witness against, and draw him from the enemy; but that he loves the enemy, and chuseth to be one with the enemy; but hates light, and turns from it, John iii. 10, 20. He hearkens to the reasonings of his mind against the light, and so smothers and chokes it; but does not turn to the light, to have all the reasonings of his mind subdued by it, and subjected to it.

9. *The true way to life eternal, is by believing in the light of the Spirit, which shineth in the conscience.* Man is in darkness, which keeps him in death; and there is no way to come out of the death, but by coming out of the darkness; and there is no way to come out of the darkness, but by following that light which discovers it, and calls forth from it; and he that doth follow that, cannot remain in the darkness, but must needs come out. There is an evil principle in man, calling for evil; and there is a good principle calling from the evil to the good: now he that followeth the good, cannot follow the evil, but departs from it. "I am the light of the world (saith Christ); he that "followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall "have the light of life." John viii. 12. But this is that which undoes man; he loves the darkness, he loves the world, the course of the world, the worships of

of the world: he loves his own underſtanding, and his own will, and ſo hates that light which croſſeth theſe, and which would teach him, by the denial of them, to crucify that nature from whence they ſpring, and to which they are ſuitable. And from hence it comes to paſs (the love to ſin within being ſtrong, and Satan, the ſtrong man, keeping the houſe) that the motions of God's Spirit are eaſily overborne, either by reaſonings of the underſtanding, or by perverſeneſs of the will: but if any man durſt truſt himſelf to them, he would quickly find of what nature they were, by the ſtrong oppoſition of the ſtrong man againſt them. It is indeed a ſtrait and narrow way, into which no fleſh can enter and walk; and yet it is the only way: for there is no life in God, no peace with God, while the enemy lives in the heart. But when the light is received and turned to, then the power begins to work, which ſlays the enemy in the heart; and that being done, there is no more war, but peace. Then the true peace, which paſſeth underſtanding, fills and refreſhes the heart; whereas the peace which was in the ſoul before, was but the peace of the enemy, and will abide no longer than the enemy is ſuffered to keep poſſeſſion quietly.

10. *That believing in the light of the Spirit, which ſhines in the conſcience, unites the ſoul to God, and opens the ſprings of life to it.* Belief in darkneſs (which is unbelief towards God) diſunited the ſoul, and cloſed up the ſprings of life from it. Belief in the light, which is ſent to lead from the darkneſs, unites again, and opens the ſprings again. God is light; he dwells in the light, and there enjoys the fulneſs of life: and he gives a meaſure of his own light to draw from the darkneſs: and he who believes and follows this, is led by it unto God, from whom it came: and being come out of the darkneſs unto him, he begins again to feel the ſprings of life, the freſh ſprings of life, which are in him. He that believeth is come to the well of ſalvation, and draws living water out of it, and drinks of the living water continually, ſo that he can thirſt

no more; yea, "out of his belly flow rivers of living "water." This is the fruit of the true faith; but this is not the fruit of the faith of the apoſtaſy; but there the ſoul remains ſtill diſunited to God, and united to the darkneſs, and drinks out of the living ſtreams, but drinks dead water. The fountain of pure life is not open to it; but the fountain of iniquity: and that blood which cleanſeth and taketh away the ſin is not known. There is only a dream of theſe things in the dark night of apoſtaſy; by which dream the conſcience is a little quieted for the preſent; but when the witneſs awakes, and the light of the day ſhines, the ſoul, which is lean, will find itſelf in the hands of the enemy, in the bonds of ſin, and feel that it never knew that power that could redeem it; but the ſubtle ſerpent deceived it with a name, inſtead of the thing.

This is the true way, the narrow way (I can, in the preſence of the living God, ſet my ſeal to the truth of it) which it hath pleaſed God to diſcover, and make manifeſt again, after the long dark night of apoſtaſy. And we come not to it by hearing or receiving any new notions or apprehenſions of things; but by feeling that which puts an end to all creaturely notions and apprehenſions; and we grow in it by the increaſe of that thing in us. The ſeed to which the promiſe was made; the ſeed which was before Abraham was, is felt, and his day is ſeen and rejoiced in; and by the light thereof the darkneſs is diſcovered, and the kingdom of darkneſs is aſſaulted. And as it daily falls in many particulars, ſo it ſhall at length fall in the general; and the kingdoms of this world ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt; and he ſhall reign upon the earth, where ſin and antichriſt have long reigned, and kept him down. And though there be a great rage and outcry among the people and heatheniſh profeſſors, yet the decree is gone forth, and Sion's king ſhall reign in the holy hill of Sion, and the hills and mountains ſhall melt before him, and the earth ſhall ſhake round about him.

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Therefore gather yourſelves together, muſter up your ſtrong forces, O ye ſeveral ſorts of carnal profeſſors. Let all your differences one againſt another fall, and join together againſt him who is againſt you all. Improve the ſerpent's wiſdom, and form arguments out of the ſcripture thereby with the utmoſt ſkill and underſtanding of fleſh; get the kings, rulers, and magiſtrates of the earth on your ſide too; handle all the weapons of the fleſh ſkilfully; diſpute, reproach, revile, whip, ſtock, impriſon, ſtarve, nay, put to death. See if you can uphold your kingdom; for there is a mighty one come forth againſt you, who will take the vineyard, the kingdom, the inheritance from you, and give it to another; and on you ſhall come that death and darkneſs, that miſery and deſtruction which ye have put far from you, and ſlighted as the portion of others. Therefore conſider your condition in the fear of the Lord; and if you feel not yourſelves able to fight it out, make your peace betimes, and let your greateſt crowns (your choiceſt wiſdom and ſtrength in the fleſh) be laid down at the feet of Chriſt, at the loweſt appearance of his light in the conſcience. Let not the leaſt check of his Spirit be ſlighted there; but eſteemed above the higheſt notions of light that ye have gathered in, or can gather with your fleſhly underſtandings. And indeed it is no leſs than its due: for this which runs freſh from the Spirit is more living in itſelf, and more proper to that man's preſent eſtate to whom it comes, than whatever he himſelf by his underſtanding can gather from the letter.

There hath been a precious ſeed of God long ſtirring in this nation; but it hath been oppreſſed, and kept in bondage, by the ſpirit of Pharaoh and his wiſe Egyptians, who would ſubject it to their laws and worſhips, and not let Iſrael go out of Egypt at God's call, to worſhip him in Spirit and truth; but would keep him in forms and ways of man's invention. The Lord hath poured out his plagues upon this ſpirit, and more and more wrought out the liberty of

his people: but as the plagues ceaſe, this ſpirit hardens itſelf, and eſſays the reducing of Iſrael into bondage again. And as Pharaoh renews the bondage of Iſrael, ſo God renews the plagues on Pharaoh and his Egyptians. Pharaoh hath a ſtubborn will, and a great wiſdom and power, and is loth to let Iſrael go; but the Lord alſo is wiſe and ſtrong, and hath a will more righteous than Pharaoh's; and by his wiſdom and ſtrength will he effect his will, and Pharaoh's ſhall not ſtand.

Who is ſuch a ſtranger in Iſrael that hath not obſerved, that as God began to raiſe up the ſeed in this nation, and call it into liberty, ſo the ſpirit of the wiſe Egyptians roſe up againſt it, exclaiming of error, hereſy, blaſphemy, new ways, new lights, &c.? And doubtleſs many tares have ſprung up; but the aim of the enemy was not ſo much to pluck up theſe tares, as to deſtroy the one good ſeed of wheat. Herod did not aim at killing all the infants in Bethlehem; but he would rather kill them all, than have Chriſt live. What preaching on the one hand! what running to the magiſtrate on the other hand! and all to deſtroy this young babe. When any different way of worſhip did appear, as of Independency, Anabaptiſm, or of ſeeking and waiting for the truth, how did they make an head againſt them, and cry out againſt them, for fear the young child ſhould be born and appear there! And now they ſee their own image brought forth there, they are at peace with them. And having diſcovered that where no part of the image or mark can be received, but there is another nature in life and truth brought forth, and no form without life will go down; now they know where to ſhoot all their darts; now they know againſt whom to invent and ſpeak all manner of evil, and againſt whom to direct all their envy, rage, and outcries, and to prepoſſeſs all ſorts of perſons every where with all manner of prejudices, that the truth may not ſpread any where, but be oppoſed every where. And all perſons minds are now ſo filled before-hand with the venom

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of the ſerpent, that truth cannot come any where, but it finds the enmity already ſtirred up, and prepared to withſtand it.

This is a new way, a new light, ſays one; we knew a religion before this came up, and we will keep to that, let who will run after theſe new ſects and ways. A natural light, the old light of nature, ſaith another, or the corrupted light of Adam, which hath run along through all his poſterity. Another outcry is, that it makes the ſcriptures void and uſeleſs. Others cry out, that it teacheth things contrary to the ſcriptures; that it ſets up free-will; that it leads to a covenant of works; that it breaks down relations, laws, governments; takes away due reſpect from magiſtracy and ſuperiors, and turns the world upſide down. Thus the worldly ſpirit is every where up in arms, and a zeal kindled every where to keep it out of every heart, and out of every place and country.

Now theſe are not real things; but ſuch kind of ſlanders and reproaches as always have attended truth. The prophets of God, Chriſt, and his apoſtles, though they have been ſpoken well of afterwards, yet they have ever been hated, ſpoken ill of, and perſecuted by the generation of profeſſors of their age. The Scribes and Phariſees could not with ſo great advantage have perſecuted Chriſt and his apoſtles, without a ſeeming zeal for the law and prophets; and yet it was the ſame ſpirit that ſo vehemently cried up the law, the prophets, the ordinances of Moſes, that perſecuted the Spirit and life in Chriſt and his apoſtles, from whence the law, the prophets, and ordinances came. And thus it is at this day; though that ſpirit is as blind now as it was then, and cannot ſee through its own cover; though it be as weak and narrow as theirs was. The guilty chargeth the innocent, that it might hide its own guilt, and keep its covering. The guilty Jews, and the guilty Scribes and Phariſees, charged the prophets, Chriſt, and his apoſtles, that they might not be found guilty by them, and have their formal covering rent from them. And thus it is

at this day; truth is risen to make manifest mens false coverings, and the guilt and hypocrisy that lie hid underneath. Now to save themselves, they are prepared beforehand to lay that charge against truth, which truth hath against them.

Search thine heart, resist not the light, thou that hast charged the truth with any of these things, and thou wilt find it thine own condition. The truth is no new light, or new way; and they that hold it forth, do not hold forth any new way, or new light; but it is thou that hast left the good old light, the good old way, which was before the apostasy, and hast fallen in with some new light, some new way, invented and set up since the apostasy. It is thou again that settest up the natural light, the fallen wisdom, the wisdom which is out of the life, and in enmity with the life; with this thou feedest that understanding which is to be brought to nought; and when thou hast done this thyself, then thou callest the spiritual light, wherewith God hath pursued it in all ages, a natural light. It is thou that with this wisdom searching into the scriptures, and gathering the oldness of the letter into the old understanding, makest the scriptures void and useless to thy soul, and canst not meet with that life and power which they speak of; but art still alive in thy sins, and dead unto God; and then thou criest out against that which comes to discover this to thee, and to bring thee out of the dead knowledge into the life of the scriptures; thou criest out against this, as if this made the scriptures useless. And when thou hast set up a whole body of knowledge, religion, and worship, quite contrary to the scriptures, which the truth comes to make manifest, then Cain's nature riseth up in thee, and thou takest up Cain's weapons, and fain wouldst thou kill thy brother, because his sacrifice in the faith testifies against thine, which is out of the faith, and contrary to the true testimony of the scriptures. Again; for free-will and a covenant of works, thou hast set up a religion in the old will and works; not according to the new covenant of life, but according to the old covenant of death. And by this thou preachest that will to be free,

free, which is in bonds; and ſetteſt up the works of man's righteouſneſs, and conformity to the letter, for the works of the new covenant. And for governments and laws, that which is according to God, which is a terror to the evil, and a praiſe to them that do well; that which is liberty to the juſt, and a curb to the unjuſt; this thou art againſt, and crieſt out daily for the turning of the magiſtrate's ſword againſt the innocent, becauſe they are a light to diſcover thy deeds of darkneſs, which are out of the light, and diſturb thy peace and thy ſettlement in that which is fleſhly, and of man, and not of God. So for relations, and honour to magiſtrates; the tranſgreſſing nature hath brought up a wrong thing, a fleſhly thing, an honour and a duty which is of the fleſh, and pleaſeth the fleſh, and is not according to God. And this is not honour indeed; not an honour that will ſtand; not an honour that will be juſtified in the ſight of God; but it is a ſhame to them that give it, and a ſhame to them that receive it; diſcovering that they are ſervants to the fleſh, giving to and receiving from the fleſhly part that which the fleſhly part (which crucifies the life) calls for, and is pleaſed with.

All that the light doth to theſe things, is to diſcover and condemn them: and the end of its diſcovery is, that they might be removed, and truth and righteouſneſs brought in the ſtead of them. But man's evil heart, which is the cauſe of them, cries out againſt the light, as if the light brought them. Whereas if man could be quiet and ſtill, and ſuffer the work of the light upon him, he would find that the ſame light which diſcovereth them, would alſo purge them away, and leave neither root nor branch of iniquity, either in men's hearts, or in relations, or families, or towns, or cities, or laws, or governments; and there would be no want of honour. Now though the ſerpent's wiſdom is irreconcileable, and that underſtanding which ſtands there cannot be ſatisfied, but muſt be confounded and brought to nought, 1 Cor. i. 19. yet becauſe underneath all this there is a ſimplicity in ſome, which is betrayed; for the relief of

that, ſomewhat further may be ſpoken in anſwer to theſe things.

Object. 1. To the firſt objection, that this is a new way, or new light, I anſwer:

Anſw. It is new indeed to them who have lain long in the apoſtaſy, and ſet up another light; but it is not new in itſelf, but the ſame that was in the beginning; yea, and before the beginning alſo. Chriſt was the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; and the light that comes from him is like him; that alſo is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. It was the ſame under the law, the ſame before the law, the ſame ſince the law. As the darkneſs all along hath been the ſame, ſo the light all along hath been the ſame alſo. It was the ſame in the Jews, and the ſame in the Gentiles. It was this God expected obedience to from the Jews; and the prophet (in the name of the Lord) diſdains their ſacrifices, and brings them to this; Micah vi. 8. "He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is "good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, "but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk "humbly with thy God?" Their eye was upon ſacrifices and oil; but the prophet points them to that which would bring them to the right ſacrifice, and to the true oil. And the Gentiles, ſo far as they were obedient to this, were accepted, and excuſed in their own conſciences; the faithful witneſs whereof is of God, and will ſtand in the day of Chriſt. Rom. ii. 15, 16. "That which was from the beginning," ſaith the apoſtle John, "declare we unto you." 1 John i. 1. And "this is the meſſage which we have heard "of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, "and in him is no darkneſs at all." Verſe 5. And the end of preaching this meſſage, is to draw out of the darkneſs into the light; to bring men to the feeling of the light of God in them, and ſo to union with it; which being turned to, draws out of the darkneſs. God, who is light, is nigh to every man, who is darkneſs; though man's ſenſe is very thick, and can hardly ſee or feel him. And a light from him ſhines

ſhines in man's darkneſs; but man's darkneſs comprehends it not. So that this light is not new in itſelf, but only new to the old ſpirit, which hath long lain hid in the region of darkneſs and death, and hath not known the light of life.

Object. 2. That this is a natural light, or the light of old Adam's nature.

Anſw. It is in one ſenſe a natural light; it is of the nature of him from whom it comes; of the nature of God, and of his Chriſt, whom it appears for: but it is not of the nature of corrupt Adam, whom it always reproved, and againſt whom it ſtill ſtands a witneſs, and condemns all corruption. Man is darkneſs; and when Chriſt comes to redeem him, he finds him darkneſs: and Chriſt finds no light in him to help him to diſcover ſin to him; but all the diſcoveries of ſin that are made in the heart, are by the light of Chriſt, and not by any light of man's nature. The Lord is the ſearcher of the heart, and he ſearcheth it with his own candle, and not with any left in man's nature. Man fell into darkneſs, and knew not where he was; but the Lord cometh after him with his candle, and diſcovereth his ſtate to him. It is the light from which man fell, and againſt which he ſins, that is alone able to make his diſobedience manifeſt to him. "We know" ſaith the apoſtle, "that the law is ſpi-"ritual; but I am carnal." Rom. vii. 14. The law is the loweſt part of the light; and yet that is ſpiritual, and of Chriſt's nature, and not of Adam's nature; "we know it," ſaith the apoſtle. Such as know the nature of that which manifeſts ſin, know it to be ſpiritual. It is the fallen man from the light, the man in the darkneſs, that calls the light darkneſs: but that which diſcovers the darkneſs, and reproves the darkneſs, and wars againſt the darkneſs, is not darkneſs, but the light of life. And thoſe who are ſpiritual, and feel the nature and power of it in their ſpirits, know it to be ſo. But man hath ſet up a light of his own; hath raiſed up a light by his ſtudy and invention, in the ſtrength of the fallen wiſdom: and

now

now ſetting up this for light, he muſt needs call the true light darkneſs, as the Phariſees did Chriſt.

Object. 3. That it makes the ſcriptures void and uſeleſs.

Anſw. It came from the Spirit that gave forth the ſcriptures; it is of the ſame nature with the light that ſhone in them that gave forth ſcriptures; it ſpeaks the ſame thing with ſcriptures, it leads to the ſame thing, and it opens and witneſſes to the words which the ſcriptures ſpeak; and ſo it brings the ſcriptures, which have been long abuſed, into their true uſe. Indeed it puts an end to the corrupt uſe of ſcriptures, to man's inventing and forming things out of them, and brings them into their true uſe and ſervice. It takes the ſcriptures out of man's hand, who hath ſlain the life by them, and puts them into the hands of the Spirit, who makes the words again pure, and quick, and living; purging away man's defiled and dead conceivings and interpretations of them.

A man muſt know the Spirit, come to the Spirit, be joined to, and be in union with the Spirit, before he can have the true underſtanding of the ſcriptures. The ſcriptures of truth are the words of God, or various expreſſions of his mind; which he that ſearcheth into, before he hath his Spirit, cannot know: and ſo man, in this ſtate, can only gueſs and imagine at things, but cannot ſee the truth. And from hence it is that ſo many ſects and heaps are ſprung up in the world, according to the variety of their imaginations. One ſort of men cry, This is the way, this is the truth, this is the church, this is the worſhip. Another ſort cry, This is not it; that is ſuperſtition and error; but this is it: and ſo a third and fourth, &c. So about ſcriptures, one ſaith this is the meaning; another ſaith it is not ſo, but this is the meaning. The Papiſts ſay, the church muſt judge of the meaning of ſcriptures; and the Proteſtants, who take more ſcope, how do they doubt and differ, and oppoſe one another, about the interpretation of ſcriptures! Which plainly ſhews that they do not plow with the right heifer; for then there

there would be unity and certainty. They let their own reaſonings and imaginations looſe, and there is no foundation of certainty. But had they waited for the Spirit to begin with, and gone on no farther than he opened to them, all theſe doubts and diſſentions would have been choked in the birth, or womb, or not have come ſo far as either birth or womb. Yet do I not altogether deny the reading of ſcriptures, even in this ſtate, if man read with fear and trembling: not ſetting up his own underſtanding, or the underſtanding of any man elſe; but waiting for the Spirit, which can alone give him an underſtanding to receive the true knowledge. But this I dare boldly affirm, that mens reading of the ſcriptures in their own wiſdom and ſelf-confidence (or confidence of what interpretation others have given) doth them no good at all, but much harm, tending to the building up of that which God will again deſtroy. But he that begins with the Spirit of God, giving himſelf up to that light which comes from him, comes to true union with God, and to the feeling of his life, and ſo to a true growth and knowledge of the Spirit of God, whereby he comes to know and underſtand the ſcriptures, which came from the ſame Spirit; and hereby alſo he comes to be able to meaſure the deceit of his own ſpirit, which formerly led him aſide, and alſo to ſee and meaſure the ſpirits of deceivers. But he that is in the deceit, in the imagination, out of the true knowledge, he cannot know the deceit of his own ſpirit, or the ſpirits of deceivers; but calls the truth deceit, and the deceit truth.

Object. 4. That this light teaches things contrary to the ſcriptures.

Anſw. That light which comes from the ſame Spirit which the ſcriptures came from, cannot teach things contrary to the ſcriptures. But man, who hath took the tools of his underſtanding, and formed images and likeneſſes out of the ſcriptures (I mean invented meanings and ſenſes, and judged theſe agreeable to the ſcriptures) he muſt needs judge that which is contrary to

to theſe, as contrary to the ſcriptures: whereas the truth is one in itſelf, and agreeth with whatſoever is true in this age, or in former ages; and differs only from that which is not true. And we know that there is that true unity with that Spirit from which the ſcriptures came, and with the ſcriptures, and with one another, in that light which the wiſdom of man cannot but deſpiſe, as hath not been in any age ſince the apoſtaſy until now.

Object. 5. That this ſets up free-will. When perſons are exhorted to embrace the light, to let in the light, and told that condemnation comes for not believing or receiving the light, then they cry out, Can man believe? Can man receive the light? Hath man free-will?

Anſw. The will of man is bound; but there is liberty, power, and freedom in the light which viſits man, and comes to unbind and ſave him. And man feels this power, taſtes of this liberty, feels ſomewhat diſengaging him from the evil, and drawing him from it: but he being in love with the evil, draws back from the drawing, ſhutting his ears againſt the wiſdom of the light, and opening his ears to the reaſonings of the ſerpent; and then the liberty and power which was in the light, withdraw with the light, and the bonds are ſtrengthened upon him. And this is the condemnation; not that there was a want of power from God, but that he choſe the power of the enemy, not loving the light, wherein the power of life lay. God knows the ſtate of man in the fall, and knows the ſtrength of the enemy; and the Saviour that he ſends hath ſufficient power againſt him; and the light that the Saviour ſends is ſtronger than the darkneſs, and can overcome the darkneſs, and cannot be overcome by the darkneſs. And if thou join with the darkneſs, and wilt not yield to the drawings of the Father, but yield up thyſelf to the drawings and reaſonings of the darkneſs; yet the ſtrength of the light remains in itſelf. And though for the preſent thou haſt ſtruck it down and ſlain it; yet it will riſe up a ſtrong and living

living witneſs againſt thee, and the darkneſs to which thou haſt joined. When a man goes from the light, he goes into the will voluntarily; then takes and chooſes in the fleſh. When a man follows the light, the will of the fleſh dieth in him, another will riſeth up, and chooſeth for him. There is the true liberty.

But as for your ſpeaking of free-will, ye do not know what ye ſpeak of: for the will, with the freedom of it, either ſtands in the image and power of him that made it, or in a contrary image and power. While it is in the image and power of him that made it, it is free unto good, and not to evil; while it is in the image and power of him who corrupted it, it is free unto evil, and not to good. The will is not of itſelf, but ſtands in another, and is ſervant to that in whom it ſtands, and there its freedom is bound and comprehended. For there is no middle ſtate between both, wherein the will ſtands of itſelf, and is free to both equally; but it is a ſervant, and under the command, of one of theſe powers. If it be under the command of ſin, of the power of darkneſs, it is free from righteouſneſs; and if it be under the command and power of righteouſneſs, it is free from ſin; but ſuch a free-will as men commonly ſpeak of, is mere imagination, and hath no foundation in the true ſtate of things.

And this may anſwer another objection, which lies as a great block in the way of many, who feel a conviction, but are withheld from obedience, under a pretence of wanting power; whereas the power lies in that light which convinceth, and is received in the obedience, and in the croſs. As the power of the enemy creeps in, in hearkening to him; ſo the power of truth is received in hearkening to, and receiving the reproofs of truth. That which checks the evil, that which ſtands againſt the mind, ſmiting it in its courſe of vanity and pleaſure in the fallen ſtate, in that is the power. That comes from the power, goes forth in the power, and the power is in it, and cannot be

be ſevered from it. So he that lets that in, lets in the power; and he that ſhuts that out, ſhuts out the power. And in this ſtate a man may complain all his days for want of power, and not meet with it: for how can he, when he refuſeth it in the way wherein the power ſeeks him, and waits for it in a way wherein it is not to be found? The appearance of the power at firſt is ſmall, and contemptible to the eye of the fleſhly wiſdom; and it is not received in any ſuch great overpowering way (though that alſo is known afterward) as man is apt to expect; but all lies in one little ſeed, where the day of ſmall things is known. The light, the life, the power, the purity, the wiſdom, &c. lies hid there; and in receiving that little thing, all is received; and in the growth of that, all grows up. But by being tempted by the enemy to neglect this, and wait for ſome great power and appearance of God, the ſoul is held in the bonds of iniquity, and kept from the life, as ſtrongly as by the groſſeſt form.

Object. 6. That this ſets up a covenant of works; for a man is bid to do, bid to obey the light; and when he does, when he obeys, he has peace; and when he obeys not, he has not peace.

Anſw. This ſets not up the works of the law; but it leads through the works of the law to the righteouſneſs of faith. "When the commandment came, ſin "revived, and I died." Rom. vii. The apoſtle was alive in his worſhip and Jewiſh ſtate, till the law came: but when the law came, it ſlew that life that he had there, and he became dead, both to that life by which he lived before, and to the law that ſlew him; and then there aroſe up a life in him which anſwered the law, and could fulfil it, and lead to a righteouſneſs beyond it: and then his life and righteouſneſs were not any works of the law, but of faith, and in the faith, Gal. ii. 19, 20. But yet there is no paſſing to this, but through the adminiſtration of the law in the heart, in the hand of the Mediator. And when the life is riſen and received, yet even then there is no peace

peace but in the obedience to the life. The peace lives in that which brings the peace; and if there be a departing from that, there is a departing from the peace. Any fleshly thought, any fleshly motion, as it is out of the life, so it is out of the peace; and the mind joining to it, feels the death and trouble of it. Thus said the apostle, Gal. vi. 15, 16. "Neither cir-" cumcision nor uncircumcision availeth, but a new " creature. And as many as walk according to this " rule, peace be on them." The peace comes to the new creature, and to man walking according to the rule of the new creature: and the condemnation is not to them that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1. But if there be an hearkening to the flesh, and a fulfilling the unrighteousness thereof in any thing, God is righteous, and he cannot speak peace to the wicked, or to him that joins with the wicked. Therefore where there is true peace, there must be a coming from the wicked nature, and a living out of the wicked nature, in him who is the life, the righteousness, the peace. I know there have been curious fabricks in mens minds about the covenant of grace; but they have not known the nature of it, and of the works that flow from it, and so are apt to call the works of the new life, springing from the covenant of life, the works of the old covenant. But wisdom is justified of her children, and they know her birth: and in the true light the true nature of things is seen, and the true name and description given, which he that is out of the light cannot receive, but stumbles at: and the wiser he is, in his own devised way and knowledge of things, the more stumbling-blocks he has, and the more he stumbles.

Object. 7. and last. That it breaks down relations, laws, governments; takes away due respect from magistracy and superiors, and turns the world upside-down.

Answ. Iniquity hath reigned, unrighteousness hath winded itself into, and twisted about every thing. And now the truth comes to discover and purge out the

the iniquity, the ſtrong man, who hitherto hath kept poſſeſſion of the houſe, cries out, as if the deſtruction of the thing were aimed at. Nay, it is only the evil that is aimed at; but the thing itſelf is not to be deſtroyed, but to be ſet free from the evil, and preſerved. Relations are good, laws are good, governments are good, of God; but the unrighteouſneſs of fleſh, the pleaſing of the fleſh by the pretence of theſe, the giving liberty to the unjuſt, this is not good. And is it not thus in relations, in government, in the execution of laws? If a man will be fleſhly, and walk in them according to the fleſh, the law takes not hold of him, his relations are not offended at him; but if he come once to feel the power of God, and withdraw from the evil, and ſtand a witneſs for God againſt it, then relations, and powers of the earth, and laws, all ſtrike at him: and the reaſon is, becauſe they are in union with the evil, and ſo cannot bear the rending of the evil from the thing. And from hence it is, that where-ever the goſpel comes in power, it kindles a flame round about, ſetting father againſt ſon, and ſon againſt father, huſband againſt wife, and wife againſt huſband, &c. Yea, it goes cloſer than ſo; it ſets one part in man againſt another; and the fight is very bitter and ſharp, till one of theſe be ſubdued, and then there is peace; fleſhly peace, if the wiſe fleſhly part prevail; ſpiritual peace, if the weak fooliſh thing (to the world) in the heart, which is of God, prevail.

And for honour to magiſtrates and ſuperiors, it is not denied; but fleſhly honour, corrupt honour, honour from the fleſhly part, and to the fleſhly part, this cannot but be denied by them which are of God. That which is born of God, is not of this world, nor can it give honour to that which is of this world; but it honours all men in the Lord. Whatever is of God in magiſtracy, it honours; whatever is in ſuperiority according to God (as a father, an huſband, a maſter is) it honours with true honour. Chriſt, the only begotten of God, could not receive honour of men, nor could

could he give honour to men: and he ſaith to the Jews, How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from God only? The receiving of honour from man, cannot ſtand with the true faith (when ye know the faith, ye will know it): he that reſpecteth perſons, committeth ſin, and is a tranſgreſſor againſt the law of faith, which leads to the life, which ſtands in God, out of the world's honours, worſhips, cuſtoms, and whatever elſe which is not of faith, but of the world. Mordecai did not bow to Haman; nay, he ſat in the king's gate, where Haman was to paſs, and yet did not ſtand up, move, or bow to him. What an affront was this to that high, proud, lofty ſpirit! and yet it was of the Lord. This was a type (as the Jewiſh ſtate in general was typical) of what God would do in the world, and is now doing. The Lord hath raiſed up Mordecai's nature, and he hath diſcovered Haman's nature, and hath given the command to Mordecai, that he ſhould not bow to Haman. And if ye could ſearch your hearts, ye would find, that it is not that of God in you which is offended for want of that which ye call honour; but the Hamaniſh ſpirit, the fleſhly pride and loftineſs, which the Lord will lay low; and he alone will be exalted in this day of his mighty power; and man ſhall only be honoured as he comes from him, and as he is found in him: but the honour which the fleſhly part hath ſought and gained in the tranſgreſſion, ſhall fall with the tranſgreſſor, whom the Lord hath furbiſhed his ſword to ſmite.

And for turning the world upſide-down, it is acknowledged: the power of the Lord is come forth to do it. That which is high, that which is wiſe, that which is ſtrong, that which is rich, that which is full, that which is fat, the Lord will lay low, make fooliſh, weak, poor, empty, lean; for it lies in wickedneſs. He will feed the fat and ſtrong cattle with that judgment which ſhall make them lean and weak. And the humble, the fooliſh, the weak, the poor, the empty, the lean, he will raiſe up, and make wiſe, and ſtrong,

and rich, and full, and fat, with the true honour, the true wiſdom, the true ſtrength, the true riches, the ſure and living mercies of David; who ſets his feet on the top of the high places of the earth; of whom Chriſt came according to the fleſh.

Thus I have in plainneſs of heart, and plainneſs of ſpeech, ſet the truth and the error before you, and lent my hand toward the removing of ſome blocks which lay in your way, in love and pity to your ſouls. Now if any, in the reading of this, feel a ſecret touch upon their hearts, ſtartling them, and giving ſome teſtimony to the truth, though very ſmall, and through a thick dark covering, there is that to which I ſpeak; there is the witneſs within the veil; and there is the teſtimony riſing up, which leads to life, if given heed to. Keep to this, and this will prick and wound, judge and condemn the contrary nature, though ever ſo ſtrong. And when it doth prick and wound, keep the wound freſh and open, as thou loveſt thy life, till thou meet with the true healer. For the falſe prophet will riſe up in thee, and fill thee with reaſonings, and perhaps multitudes of promiſes and comforts from ſcripture, ſkinning over the wound, and crying Peace, peace, when there is no peace. And when thou haſt thus got over the trouble, then the falſe prophet, which brought thee this peace, will ſtir thee up againſt the witneſs, exalting the wiſdom and reaſonings of the fleſh, and making merry with thee over the witneſs, which witneſſed againſt thee and him, and over the trouble which came thereby; and this will bring thee to that hardneſs of heart which is for deſtruction. And when thou haſt ſlain the witneſs in thyſelf, and exalted thy fleſhly reaſon and underſtanding over it, then the falſe prophet which ſeduced thee will kindle a zeal in thee againſt the witneſs in others; and thou wilt prove a perſecutor of the life, under the name of deceit, error, hereſy, and blaſphemy; whereas thou thyſelf art fallen into the deceit, into the error from the life, and into the blaſphemy againſt it, and art

art in Cain's nature, and wouldſt fain be handling of Cain's weapons to deſtroy it.

Therefore take heed of the fleſhly wiſdom; take heed of thine own underſtanding; take heed of thy reaſoning or diſputing; for theſe are the weapons wherewith the witneſs is ſlain. That wiſdom muſt be deſtroyed, and that underſtanding brought to nought, and thou become a child, and learn as a child, if ever thou know the things of God. "Where is the "wiſe? Where is the Scribe? Where is the diſputer "of this world?" Did they ever, from the beginning of the world to this day, attain the knowledge of the things of God? Where are the councils? Where are the great convocations? Where are the ſynods? Where are the aſſemblies of divines? What is become of them all? What have they done? Have they been ever able to lead out of the apoſtaſy from the truth into the truth again? Nay: that wiſdom is curſed; it is of the earth, and fixed in the earth, and is the grand enemy to the wiſdom that is from above: and where that wiſdom ſtands, there is no entrance for the other. This made it ſo hard for this ſort of perſons, in all ages, to own truth. *Thy wiſdom and thy knowledge hath perverted thee.* This made the whoriſh ſpirit ſo able to uſe ſorceries and inchantments from the life in all ages. And it is eaſier for publicans, harlots, drunkards, ſwearers, and all ſorts of ſinners to own truth, and enter into life, than for theſe. For it is eaſier to empty them of their profaneneſs, than it is to empty theſe of their ſettled conceited religion and devotion: and yet theſe, with their religion and devotion, cannot enter, no more than the other with their profaneneſs. Ye have a knowledge, a righteouſneſs, an hope, a faith, *&c.* founded by your pretence to ſcriptures. Who can ſhake down theſe, ſay you? And yet theſe muſt fall, before ye can build upon, and grow up in, the life that the ſcriptures came from. For the ſcriptures were not given for men to gather out of, and lay a foundation of faith there, by their own wills; but to

diſcover and teſtify of the foundation. And he that comes thither, and is built there, knows the truth; not becauſe the ſcriptures ſay ſo, but becauſe he feels the thing, is founded upon the thing, grows up in the thing, and the thing in him, whereof the ſcripture ſpeaks. And this knowledge ſhall abide, and this faith, and this righteouſneſs, and this holineſs, and this redemption; whereas the other is but a name, put upon that which is not the thing.

Theſe are precious and faithful words (though through a veſſel weakened, and weak beyond meaſure); and happy is he that hath an ear to hear them; but woe from the Lord to that eye that is cloſed, to that ear that is ſhut, to that heart that is hardened, in the inventions and imaginations of man's fleſhly mind, againſt the truth of God. Let the witneſs of God in thee ſtir and ſpeak, it ſhall anſwer me now: but if thou, through the ſtrength of the fleſh, and the vain imaginations which thou huggeſt in thy heart, ſtifle the voice of it now, yet I know it ſhall anſwer me one day; but then it will be too late for thee to hear it.

The Lord is now gentle and tender, purſuing thee with his love, and following thee up and down with his light. And though thou run from him into ſin and tranſgreſſion, and hearken to the wiſdom of the fleſh; yet his voice comes after thee to reclaim thee: and if thou wilt hear, and but yield thyſelf to him, he will not put thee to do any thing; but ſubdue all thy enemies for thee; yea, he will ſlay the ſerpentine wiſdom in thee, with all its inventions, and daſh all the children of Babylon againſt the ſtones, without pity to them, though with great pity to thee. But if thou refuſe, and chuſe the pleaſure of the fleſh, and the groſs fleſh-pots of Egypt, and turn thine ear from his voice, giving way to the reaſonings of the fleſh, and keeping down the witneſs, the day of wrath and ſeverity, which all the ſcriptures have ſpoken of, will come, and thou wilt have thy portion with hypocrites, who in all ages have covered themſelves with a form

of

of religion, pleasing to the flesh and the world; but have withheld their hearts from the power of life. Therefore prize the love of God to thee in giving thee this warning; and be not uncircumcised in heart and ears, as this generation of professors have always been; but let Christ reign in thy heart, and let him trample all man's invented forms of knowledge and worship under his feet, and give up thyself to be led by him into the true knowledge and worship in the spirit and in the truth.

And now you who find your hearts touched and convinced of the truth, and find any desire kindled in you after the living God, and an hungering and thirsting after his righteousness, take notice of these three things, which I have upon my heart to say to you, by way of advice:

1. *Know and take up thy cross*, the cross of Christ, the daily cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is that which crosseth the natural; and this is the power of God to deliver from the natural. How should the earthly understanding, the earthly will, the earthly affections, with the elementary nature (which have had their swing in the earth) be crucified and slain, but by the cross of Christ? He therefore that will have a religion to please himself in any thing, must not come hither; and he who after he is come hither, admitteth of any thing pleasing to the earthly, and starteth from the cross, which would deny and turn from it; so far as he doth so, he goeth backward, and not forward. It is no wonder that there is such an enmity in all sorts against the truth; for it striketh at their life, yea, at the very root of their life. If there were any new way or form of religion held forth, mens understandings and affections might by degrees be wrought up to it, and find pleasure in it; but this is direct death to that nature and spirit that hath lived in any form of religion, and to the whole course of that nature and spirit; yet through this death the true life springs up, in those who receive the strokes of it. Therefore be willing, and learn to die daily, and bring

every thing which is contrary to Chriſt to the croſs. Deny ſelf in every thing, take up the croſs in every thing, follow Chriſt in every thing. This is the way which Chriſt himſelf preſcribes to become his diſciples by: "If any man will come after me, let him "deny himſelf, take up his croſs daily, and follow "me." Seek not eaſe in the fleſh, no not in the leaſt; but take up the croſs every day, in every thing, till the earthly be ſlain; till the wiſdom and ſtrength of the fleſh be wholly ſubdued, and then the wiſdom and power of God will become natural.

2. *Keep to the ſenſe*, keep to the feeling; beware of the underſtanding, beware of the imagining conceiving mind. Theſe cannot be for God, nor bring forth any thing for God, until they be new caſt, and new moulded. The one ſeed of life lies in the inviſible, in the hidden man of the heart, among multitudes of ſeeds of death; all which have their growth up into, and ſtrength in, the corrupted natural. So that this ſeed cannot ſhoot up into any part of the natural, but the other ſeeds ſhoot up with it, and endeavour to choke it. Now the other ſeeds ſpring up two ways, either in a way of oppoſition againſt the true ſeed, or in a way of ſimilitude. There cannot a good thought, or deſire, or beam of light, enter into the underſtanding or will, but multitudes of evil thoughts, evil deſires, or fleſhly reaſonings againſt it, will ſpring up with it, and ſtrive to overbear it. And if the enemy be at length overcome, by the power of God fighting with him and vanquiſhing him, then he hath his garment of light; then he brings in thoughts and deſires, and motions like God's, which eaſily paſs for good, if the ſoul keep not cloſe upon the watch. The forward underſtanding is apt preſently to own them, and the forward will to embrace, and the forward affections to let themſelves forth into them, until the ſoul come to feel a loſs in life, and miſs the power and preſence of God, and find the enemy ſtrong again. Yea, the enemy hath yet a more ſubtil way; namely, to raiſe motions like the motions of God's ſpirit,

ſpirit, and ſuddenly, before the light hath given the diſcerning of them, to raiſe oppoſitions and reaſonings againſt them; that ſo by the oppoſition, which is manifeſtly evil, the motion itſelf, which is alſo evil (though good in appearance) might be the leſs ſuſpected, and ſwallowed. Now the only way of ſafety is to keep out of the natural, whereof the enemy hath poſſeſſion, and where his ſtrength lies, and to keep in the ſenſe and feeling of the inviſible ſeed, and only to come forth with him into the natural, in that ſenſe and feeling. And when he comes, he will come with ſtrength, above the ſtrength that the enemy hath in the natural, and by degrees conquer him. But by no means reſt or abide in the natural, but retire with the Lord (who will not dwell there until it be cleanſed) into the reſting-place. Theſe words may be hard to you at preſent; but hereafter (as you come into the exerciſe) you will feel them. And this is the reaſon why the formal and outward part of religion doth ſo commonly eat out the life, becauſe things there are ſuitable to, and exerciſe, that part wherein the ſtrength of the enemy lies; and there can never be perfect freedom and ſafety until that part be ſubdued, and all that belongs to that part removed. The Lord is riſen to ſhake, that the kingdom which cannot be ſhaken may appear; and happy are they who are ſhaken by his hand in all that is outward, and eſtabliſhed in the inward life, power, and reſt, which remaineth for ever, and cannot be ſhaken.

3. *Wait patiently the Lord's leiſure.* Be not haſty after life and ſalvation in the will of the fleſh; but leave the Lord to chuſe his own ſeaſon for the ſhowering down of his mercy and bleſſing. The Lord will not preſently entertain that ſpirit which hath adulterated from him (proſtituting itſelf to ſtrangers, and defiling itſelf), into his boſom; but there muſt be a time of ſorrow, a time of purifying and cleanſing. The ſoul muſt know and feel that it hath been an evil thing and bitter, that it hath forſaken the Lord, the living fountain of living mercies, and hath ſought

life from vanities, and among dead idols. And all the idols must be thrown away, and the heart washed from that nature that ran after them, and become a pure virgin, to bear and bring forth the living seed; and by faithfulness to that seed, and waiting in that seed, in the Lord's season it shall receive the mercy, and the blessing, and the inheritance which belongs to that seed. The husbandman doth not presently reap, but waits long, even till the seed be grown up to maturity. Jacob, the type of the seed, said, "O "Lord, I have waited for thy salvation." It is the election that obtains: it is to the seed, and for the seed's sake, that the mercy is bestowed; and there must be a waiting till the seed be grown up to age, and able to defend his portion from his elder brother, who otherwise would be ready to seize on it, and waste it upon harlots again. Therefore lie still, and bear the indignation of the Lord against that which hath transgressed, till he judge it, and deliver from it, and lead into the innocency and righteousness, and then he will find a time to arise, and plead the cause of the innocent, and give the crown of immortal life to that which he hath prepared for it. Therefore think not the race long, nor the battle hard, nor be weary of the afflictions and chastisements in the way; but follow the captain, the guide, the leader; whose light, strength, courage, and wisdom, will overcome all, and bring the soul which abides in it into his own throne.

Now as you thus wait, taking up the cross, and keeping in the feeling; so the corrupt natural, the mortal, wherein Satan's throne and power hath been, will wither, decay, and grow weak daily; and the tender plant of God, the immortal seed, will shoot up, and gather strength daily; and you will come to a will in God, and an understanding in God, and that which is of God will manifest itself; and you will come to know, and desire, and take delight in the things of God: then the soul, which is immortal, will come to hear, and receive, and feed on the immortal

mortal word, which is the bread of life, and which alone is able to preſerve and nouriſh up to eternal life. Then ye will know what it is to tremble at this word, and to have all the powers of nature melt and fail before it. Then ye will know the faith which gives the victory, and the knowledge which lets into life, and the fear which keeps the heart clean, and the hope which anchors the ſoul immortal in the immortal God, and the patience which wins the crown. And ſo ye will come to witneſs the ſeveral conditions of the ſaints in ſcripture as ye grow up into them, and will not need men to give you meanings of ſcriptures from their brain-ſtudies, and acquired arts and underſtandings; but will know the meaning from the thing itſelf in your own hearts, and hear the words from the living voice of that ſpirit that firſt ſpake them, who alone is able to interpret his own mind, and open the words which he himſelf ſpake. And then ye will know and love life, and need no more exhortations to depart from all dead, corrupted, and corrupting forms, which ever were, and ever will be, enemies to, and betrayers of, the life. And ſo the peace of God, the reſt of God, the true ſabbath of God, the everlaſting light and life of God, will come to be your own, and enjoyed by you, paſt all gainſaying or diſpute in you; while the natural underſtanding in others is reaſoning, contending and diſputing about them, but can never know, while they are from the thing within: for that mind is not the heir, nor muſt it inherit the kingdom of God.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

To thoſe who have had a ſeriouſneſs and depth in their religion, who could not ſit down in empty forms and ſhadows of things, but have been preſſing after the living ſubſtance; and miſſing of that, through error of judgment (the true eye being not fixed in the head) have come to a loſs; and ſo are returned to, overgrown with, and hardened in, the old nature; and have taken up a pitiful reſt and center in the earth, having let fall the purſuit of their ſpirits after the true center of reſt in the life: a word to ſuch from the love in the life.

THERE was a ſpirit, ſoul, or image of God brought forth, and ſtanding in his life, before the fall.

This ſoul was brought into death, under the burthen and bondage of corruption, out of its proper center and reſting-place, by the fall.

Now as there is in this ſtate a true loſs, ſo there is in this ſpirit a ſenſibleneſs, a groaning under the burden, a feeling the bitterneſs of the captivity, and panting after redemption and reſtoration to its former ſtate.

Now though the whoriſh part, which ſeduced from the life, make a great noiſe in the fleſh about ſaints words, and tempt to pleaſures of the outward part, and pleaſures in the mind, and draw into forms and religious worſhip, and frame deep centers of ſatisfaction in the underſtanding (perhaps from true openings of the life, quenching it) and ſo ſeek to quiet the ſoul, and ſtill the cry; yet the loſt ſtate remaining, the ſoul being not truly redeemed, but a falſe reſt taken up by the way, in the falſe part, this will fail, and the ſenſe be again renewed in the day of trial and ſore trouble. For the ſoul, by any imagination, or notion, or feeling of a center in the corrupt mind, cannot be healed

or

or reſtored; but only by having the true life raiſed up again in it, and itſelf brought into its proper place and manſion in the fountain of life.

There have been in the ſhakings of this nation great ſtirrings, the ſeed ſpringing up, and great opening to the ſeed; the ſpirit of prophecy hath been enlarged in us, above what many of our forefathers felt; but the way into the ſpring of life hath not been known, where the preſervation is: ſo the whoriſh part, the corrupt part, the underſtanding which was not purified, and brought into ſubjection into the truth, this harlot caught the openings and prophecies of the true ſpirit, conceived with them, and brought forth children to the fleſh; bringing forth a more inward apprehenſion of things, a more ſpiritual kind of knowledge, as of God to be all, all to be good, and in God, and all ſin and evil done away there, *&c.* And ſo ſuch as center here, form the fleſhly mind, as it were, in him, as it was not known before. And now the redemption is forgotten, the pantings after life ſlain, and the fleſh can lie down quiet in the unredeemed eſtate, and ſay, it is his will, it is good; and it can reſt ſatisfied there in that will of his which is good. Thus the great abomination from the ſubtil fleſh ſprung up, which made many hearts deſolate of very precious ſpringings-up and buddings-forth of the true life and power of God.

But after this great loſs and betraying of the life in them, it hath pleaſed God to raiſe it up in others, and to diſcover the hammer, the ſword, the fire, which can knock down, cut down, and burn up this whoriſh part; and thither the whore is brought, when ſhe comes to betray again, and the ſpringings-up of life ſhrink back, and lie ſafe in the center, while the whore is burning. And as the whore is burnt, the heir comes up, and the ſpirit (which is the portion of his inheritance) deſcends and reſts upon him; and by this he is known; and that which is in union with him knows him. Therefore, if you will live, come to that hammer, that ſword, that fire which fleſh dreads, and

and let the flesh be delivered up to it: and do not despise the day of small things, waiting for some great appearance; but know it in its lowest knock: for its power of redemption is as truly there, as in its greatest appearance. He that hath an ear let him hear, and his soul shall live.

Let those therefore whom this concerns consider their ways (as the grace that appeared to me hath taught me to do) and try this foundation, upon what they stand; and that they do not kill what is opened, and live in the slain openings, and so in the end become dark, airy, dry, withered, wheeling about, and turning into the earth, it becoming their rest and foundation again, and so losing the joys which formerly the opener did open. This, with me, many of you may witness; for whom my desire is, that they may also witness the return to that which then opened, and live in the opener, and be preserved by him from abusing his precious openings any more.

For though I had a true taste of life and power from God; yet not knowing the foundation, there could be no true building with it: and so the spirit was quenched, the life wasted, the portion spent upon harlots, the true bread lost, and chaff and husks fed upon, without the least satisfaction to the soul; the sense whereof, when the spirit of the Lord awakened me, did almost overwhelm me. Yea, the bands of death were so strengthened upon me, and the spirit of the world had taken such hold of me, that I found my return very difficult: yea, when living words of hope were mentioned to me, to draw me back to that principle of life from which I had gone out, I could receive nothing; but cry out, Impossible! impossible! impossible! I felt myself like a tree twice dead, plucked up by the roots, without the capacity of life, sense, or motion in the eternal being any more. But at length it pleased life to move in a low way in the midst of the powers of darkness in my heart; and by sinking low out of the wisdom, out of the reason, out of all high imaginations, and trusting myself to it;

it; though dreadful ſtrokes and oppoſitions were felt from the powers of darkneſs; yet at length there was ſome appearance of the deliverer, in ſuch a poor, low, weak, deſpicable way, as could never have been welcomed, had not the ſoul been firſt brought to diſtreſs, and the loftineſs of the imaginary part brought down. And then coming out of that into the feeling, in another part, there was a ſeed ſprung up into a child; and as the child grows, and feeds on the milk of the immortal Word, I live, and am ſtrengthened in him, and daily weakened in that part which lived before. Theſe are true words, from an honeſt heart, for the relief of thoſe who may have been entangled in the ſame ſnare.

A TESTIMONY of great concernment to all thoſe that call themſelves Chriſtians, but have not known the true church, of which alone the true Chriſtian can be born.

THERE hath been a great war between the woman and her ſeed, and the harlot and her ſeed, from the beginning to this day; and they have each had their prevailings in the war. The woman and her ſeed have been made ſtrong in God, to conquer ſome of the territories of death, and to ſet up their life in the world. Thus, in the Jewiſh ſtate, God prepared an heaven and earth for the woman and her ſeed, and when that heaven and earth were ſhaken, he prepared a more glorious heaven and earth in the Chriſtian ſtate. Now no ſooner was the church and her ſeed ſeated in either of theſe, but the dragon made war againſt her, and in the war had power given him to recover her ſeat from her. Thus the devil got poſſeſſion of the Jewiſh ſtate, ſo that there was no room for the true church there, but all was in idolatry and corruption; and the Lord was not ſerved by their ceremonies, by their ſacrifices, by their ſabbaths, by their

their new moons, by their temple-worſhips, &c. but the devil. And the devil alſo got poſſeſſion of the heaven and the earth in the Chriſtian ſtate; ſo that in their ordinances, and in their worſhips, in their duties, in thoſe which they call their churches, God hath not been worſhipped in the truth, but the devil, for theſe many ages. For mark: who was it that got into the temple of God? Was it not antichriſt? Was it not the ſpirit of Satan? 2 Theſſ. ii. 4. And who was it that was worſhipped in all the world, that had power given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, and whom all that dwell upon the earth worſhip? Was it not the dragon? Rev. xiii. 7, 8. Did not all the world wonder after the beaſt, and worſhip the dragon which gave power unto the beaſt? ver. 3, 4. of that chapter. The woman was aſſaulted here, her ſtrong holds taken from her, ſo that ſhe could not ſtay ſafe in that heaven and earth which God had made for her; therefore there was another place prepared for her by God in the wilderneſs, and ſhe had wings of an eagle given her to fly thither; but the dragon got into, and held poſſeſſion of, the heaven where ſhe was before, Rev. xii. So that none hath known the church all this time but he that hath been born of her in the wilderneſs; which was a place the world never dreamed of, but looked for her in the heaven and in the earth, which the devil had got poſſeſſion of. And here they cry up the ordinances! the ordinances! duties! the church! the miniſtry! &c. (as the Jews did "the temple of the Lord! the temple "of the Lord!") not knowing in whoſe hands theſe were, and whom they worſhipped hereby. Now conſider this, O ye Chriſtians! I ſpeak what I aſſuredly know, that God could not be truly worſhipped in any of theſe, while they were in the devil's hands; but the whoriſh ſpirit and her ſeed worſhip here: and the worſhip of the church, and her ſeed, was a wilderneſs worſhip, or a worſhip which ſhe learned of God in the wilderneſs. Mark now, and conſider my teſtimony, O ye Chriſtians! I deny all the worſhip, all the ordinances,

nances, which were taught the Chriſtians of old, now practiſed by the whoriſh ſpirit; for the devil had gained it, and corrupted it; and having corrupted it, God could not be any more worſhipped in it; but the antichriſtian ſpirit ſat there, giving forth thoſe things as his laws. He ſat in the temple of God, and there made uſe of the veſſels and ordinances which he had carried captive into his Babylon; and I deny it to be poſſible to have any true uſe of theſe till the time of the recovery. And now the time of the recovery is come, and the reſtitution begun; people know it not, but cry up the old heaven, and the old earth, which Satan had corrupted, ſetting it up in oppoſition againſt the new, which God hath new formed, and is bringing forth in true beauty and glory.

Now in this war, though the devil, though the harlot and her ſeed got the woman's ſeed from her, and baniſhed her ſeed as it were out of the earth, yet they were not able to touch the woman, nor to overcome the life of God in her ſeed, but only to kill their bodies; but the life was ſtill conqueror over them, and not ſubjected to them. They could raiſe up churches, and ordinances, and miniſters, and duties, and cauſe all that dwell on the earth to worſhip in ſome part or other of his Babylon; but they could never make the ſeed bow to any of their images; nor could they hurt the woman hereby who was in the wilderneſs, out of the reach of all theſe; and there ſhe did eat the bread of life with tears, mourning over her deſolate eſtate, and her loſs of children. And here alone was the true bread of life, which was not to be known or taſted of in any of the ordinances of the apoſtaſy. Ye will all one day acknowledge this to be a true teſtimony, held forth to you in true love: it were good for you that ye could ſee it now.

A brief

A brief account of what we are, and what our work is in the world.

WE are a people whom God hath converted to himſelf; a people in whom God hath raiſed up the ſeed of his own life, and cauſed it to reign over the earthly part in ourſelves; a people whom God hath divorced from the ſpirit of whoredom, and joined to his own Spirit. We, many of us, ſought truly and only after God from our childhood; our conſciences bear us witneſs in the ſight of God; but the honeſty of our hearts was ſtill betrayed, and we led aſide by the whoriſh ſpirit, and knew not how to turn to that of God in us, which inclined us towards God. By this means we came to great diſtreſs and miſery beyond all men. Not but that all men were in as great a want of God, his life, power, and preſence, as we; but the ſenſe thereof was not ſo quickened in others as in us. Now it pleaſed the Lord at length to pity us, and to inform our minds towards himſelf; to ſhew us where life lay, and where death lay; and how to turn from the one and to the other, and he gave us his helping hand to turn us: and by being turned to him, we have taſted of the truth, of the true wiſdom, of the true power, of the true life, of the true righteouſneſs, of the true redemption; and by receiving of this from God, and taſting and handling of it, we come to know that that which the world hath ſet up in the ſtead of it, is not the thing itſelf. Now mark, we are not perſons that have ſhot up out of the old root into another appearance, as one ſect hath done out of another, till many are come up one after another, the ground ſtill remaining the ſame out of which they all grew; but that ground hath been ſhaken and ſhaking, deſtroyed and deſtroying, removed and removing in us; and the old root of Jeſſe hath been made manifeſt in us, and we have been tranſplanted by the everlaſting power of life, and a real

a real change brought forth in us out of that ſpirit wherein the world lives and worſhips, into another Spirit, into which nothing which is of the world can enter. And here we have met with the call of God, the converſion to God, the regeneration in God, the juſtification, the ſanctification, the wiſdom, the redemption, the true life and power of God, which the world cannot ſo much as bear the name of. And what we are made of God in Chriſt, we know to be truth, and no lie; and when we teſtify of this to the world, in the meaſure of the life of God in us, we ſpeak truth, and no lie; though the world, which knoweth not the truth, cannot hear our voice.

Now our work in the world is to hold forth the virtues of him that hath called us; to live like God; not to own any thing in the world which God doth not own; to forget our country, our kindred, our father's houſe, and to live like perſons of another country, of another kindred, of another family; not to do any thing of ourſelves, and which is pleaſing to the old nature; but all our words, all our converſation, yea, every thought in us, is to become new. Whatever comes from us, is to come from the new principle of life in us, and to anſwer that in others; but we muſt not pleaſe the old nature at all in ourſelves, nor in any elſe. And walking faithfully thus with God, we have a reward at preſent, and a crown in the end, which doth and will countervail all the reproaches and hardſhips we do or can meet with in the world.

We are alſo to be witneſſes for God, and to propagate his life in the world; to be inſtruments in his hand to bring others out of death and captivity into true life and liberty. We are to fight againſt the powers of darkneſs every where, as the Lord calleth us forth. And this we are to do in his wiſdom, according to his will, in his power, and in his love, ſweetneſs, and meekneſs. We are not to take ways according to our own wiſdom (but there muſt be a ſtrict watch ſet in the life, leſt that get up again); nor muſt we ſpeak ſuch words as man's wiſdom would

call wife; nor may we go in our own will to ſeek any; but the Lord muſt go before: nor may we make uſe of our own ſtrength, but feel his arm in our weakneſs: nor may we go forth in that love, ſweetneſs, or meekneſs, which is pleaſing to the fleſhly mind; but we muſt be true to God, handling the ſword ſkilfully and faithfully, judging and cutting down the tranſgreſſor in the power and authority of God: and when the meek, the lowly, the humble thing is reached and raiſed, then the true love, the ſweetneſs, the tenderneſs, the meekneſs muſt go forth to that. The Lord God is rough with the tranſgreſſor, and all along the ſcripture heweth and judgeth him; and if we come forth in the ſame Spirit, we ſhall find the ſame leadings where we meet with the ſame thing: for the Lord God will never be tender there; nor can that which comes from him, lives in him, is led by him, be tender there, where he is not.

Now the very root of this ſeverity is good, and of God, and hath love and ſweetneſs at the bottom of it; yea, in pity, love, and bowels do we uſe the ſword. It is in pity to the poor captived creature, that that might be cut down which keeps it in bonds and captivity. And though we ſeem enemies to all ſorts of men for the Lord's ſake; yet we are not enemies, nor could do the leaſt hurt to them any way; but are true friends to their ſouls, and bodies alſo: and our only controverſy is with that which captives and makes them miſerable; for we fight not at all with fleſh and blood, but with the principality and power which led from God, and rules in it againſt God, to the poor creature's ruin and deſtruction. Yea, if we had all the power of the earth in our hands, we could not ſet up our own way, (if, after the manner of men, I may ſo call it) or ſo much as diſturb others in their way thereby; but ſhould wait in patience till God gave us an entrance by his power.

Now let not men run on in heats againſt us; but let them ſeriouſly conſider whether we be of God or no:

no: and let them conſider not with the reaſon and underſtanding which is alienated from God; but with the witneſs which lies hid in the heart. There is one great palpable argument that we are of God, which is this: all the world is againſt us; the worldly part every where fights with us; the worldly part, in every ſort and ſect of men, oppoſeth us; the rage of men every where riſeth up againſt us: but thoſe that are ſo hot againſt us, if at any time they become but meek and calm, patiently conſidering our cauſe, and conſulting thereupon with the teſtimony that they find in their own hearts concerning us, they ſoon become pacified, and ſee that we are no man's enemies, againſt no righteous law, not againſt relations, not againſt governments, not againſt any thing in the world that is good; but only againſt that which is evil and corrupt. And of a truth, the corruption of things God hath ſhewn unto us, and daily calls us forth after an immediate manner to witneſs againſt.

Therefore let men be ſober, and take heed what they do, leſt they be found fighters againſt God; for the reproaches, the ſcoffs, with other perſecutions, which ſeem to be caſt at us, light on him. It is not as we are men, but as we are obedient to him, as we ſtand witneſſes for him, that we meet with theſe things. Now as it is not we ourſelves that do theſe things, but the life and power of God in us; ſo it is not we that are ſtruck at, but that life and power: if it were not for that, we might be as acceptable as other men. It is becauſe we are not of the world, but God hath called us out of the world, that we are ſo hated of the world. This is the true cauſe; though the world will no more now acknowledge it, than it would in former ages. Yet I do not ſpeak this for my own ſake, to avoid my ſhare in the croſs; for the reproach of Chriſt is our riches; yea, far greater treaſure than is to be found in the palace of Egypt. Yea, the preſence of God, the ſweet power of life, makes up all our loſſes; ſo that we have no cauſe to complain. It is very ſweet, pleaſant, and profitable for us to be

found ſufferers for God; but we know it will not be profitable for you to be found perſecutors: and this is told you in true love and good-will, by one who wiſhes no evil to you, for all that evil that ye have exerciſed toward the dear and precious people of God for theſe many years. O that God would open your eyes, that ye might ſee whom ye have oppoſed, and againſt whom ye have hardened and ſtrengthened yourſelves, that ye might bow to him, and receive life from him, and not periſh in your gainſaying and oppoſition.

An addition concerning the doctrine of juſtification.

BECAUSE the doctrine of juſtification is of great concernment, and the enemy of mankind hath exceedingly endeavoured to corrupt it, and in the apoſtaſy hath greatly prevailed; and the darkneſs which ſprings up in the fleſhly wiſdom is exceeding thick at this day concerning this thing; therefore, in true love to ſouls, it is laid upon me to ſearch into that ſcripture which chiefly ſpeaks thereof, and from thence to clear it up to ſuch who are not yet come to the life that gave forth the ſcriptures.

The apoſtle Paul doth largely and fully treat of it, in his epiſtle to the Romans, and lays down ſeveral things concerning it; which, if well heeded, may daſh mens preſent apprehenſions about it, and bring them to wait for the opening of thoſe ſcriptures to them in another light than they have yet known.

1. He affirms that juſtification is not "by the deeds "of the law." Rom. iii. 20. If a man could ſay, with the young man, All theſe things have I done from my youth; or as Paul, that he was, as touching the law, blameleſs; yet could he not be juſtified thereby.

And the apoſtle gives a mighty reaſon; "for by "the law is the knowledge of ſin." Now juſtification is not by the making of ſin known; but by that which ſaves

ſaves and delivers from it. The knowledge of ſin may put a man upon ſeeking out for juſtification; but it cannot juſtify him, but rather condemn him; but that which delivers him from the ſin, which the law makes known, that juſtifies him.

2. He affirms that "the righteouſneſs of God" (which is the juſtification) "is manifeſted without the "law." Ver. 21. The law makes ſin known, and ſhews the ſinner the need of juſtification; but the juſtification itſelf is not thereby, but is manifeſted without it. The law commands the nature to act that pertains to ſimilitudes, figures, types, and ſhadows, to the obedience of them; but the ſeed takes away the nature that pertains to ſimilitudes, and ſhadows, and the works of the law. So to the obedience of thoſe things the law commands, there is juſtification by the law in the obedience to the works it commands; but the juſtification, Chriſt, removes the nature that pertains to thoſe things the law commands: ſo that juſtification, the law, ends in Chriſt.

3. That this righteouſneſs or juſtification is "wit- "neſſed by the law and the prophets." Ver. 21. The law, though it is not the juſtification, nor can the juſtification be by obedience to it, or by the deeds of it; yet it gives teſtimony to the juſtification: for the ſubſtance of what the law and all the prophets witneſs is, that nothing can juſtify but the righteouſneſs of God.

4. That this righteouſneſs or juſtification is "by "the faith of Chriſt," ver. 22. by believing or entering into that which juſtifies. As condemnation was by unbelief, by joining unto, and entering into the ſpirit of enmity; ſo juſtification is by joining unto, and entering into the Spirit of love, by true union with Chriſt in the Spirit; which union is by the faith which comes from Chriſt.

5. That this juſtification or righteouſneſs is "upon "all that believe." Ver. 22. He that receiveth the faith, believeth; and he that believeth, hath righteouſneſs; and he that believeth not cannot have the

righteouſneſs; but the condemnation and wrath abideth on him.

6. That this juſtification is "freely by the grace," ver. 24. There is no way to come to this righteouſneſs but by the gift of grace; which gift is given freely. Therefore, if ever man will be juſtified, he muſt know the grace, and the gift which comes from the grace, and receive it; and receiving it, he cannot miſs of juſtification; and not receiving it (but either being ignorant of it, or reſiſting of it), he cannot poſſibly be juſtified.

7. That this juſtification is by the "*redemption of* "*Chriſt*," ver. 24. Chriſt is the redeemer; the redemption (wherein is the juſtification) is in him, and there is no way of meeting with the juſtification or redemption, but by receiving of him in whom it is; and he who hath him, hath the juſtification, and is made partaker of the redemption; and he who hath not him, hath it not.

Mark then, the juſtification or redemption is not by believing of a thing done without man (though that alſo is to be believed) but by receiving him into the heart. For the virtue of all Chriſt did without, is within him: and I cannot be made partaker thereof by believing that he did ſuch a thing without, or that he did it for me, but by receiving the virtue of it into me, and feeling the virtue of it in me. This is that which ſaves me, and makes that which was done without to be mine.

8. That Chriſt is the "propitiation," ver. 25. or that which pacifies and makes way for ſinners to God; ſo that he that truly receiveth Chriſt hath the atonement; but he that hath not received him, only dreameth of peace with God; but ſtill remaineth in the enmity, and is liable to the wrath, having the bond of iniquity over him, and is in the night.

9. That this propitiation is by "faith in the blood," ver. 25. There is nothing pacifies God but the blood of his Son; and there is nothing feels the blood but the faith, and that which is in the faith. A man may

read

read ſcriptures, and gather notions about juſtification, and think he believes aright, and ſhall be juſtified; but he never comes to feel the blood, nor the life which is in the blood, till he receive the faith, and then he knoweth the true propitiation, and the true peace, which before he did but talk of.

10. That this faith is "the righteouſneſs;" faith is the gift of God, and this gift juſtifies; this gift is the juſtification; this is that which God "imputeth "for righteouſneſs, chap. iv. ver. 3, 5. The faith is in the blood, and the blood in the Son; and in the true receiving of the Son, both the faith and the blood are known and felt. Theſe are true words, though hard to the fleſhly ear. Do not ſtumble in the wiſdom, but calmly wait for the revelation of the ſpirit, and then thou wilt ſay, the price of this knowledge is not to be valued; and if once thou come to taſte truth here, all thy knowledge in the letter will be but droſs with thee. "Ye are come to the blood of "ſprinkling." O do not reſt in an outward way of believing, an outward thing; but ſeek out the way of coming to the blood of ſprinkling.

11. That the juſtification is of the "ungodly" ver. 5. He whom God maketh righteous, was ungodly before he made him righteous. There was nothing but unrighteouſneſs could be imputed to him in tranſgreſſion, before he gave him his Son, and made him righteous in his Son; for nothing is righteous with God but Chriſt, and man only as he is taken into his righteouſneſs; which is done not by a believing from the bare letter, but by a receiving of faith in the life.

12. That the juſtification of the ungodly is, by believing in him that juſtifieth, ver. 5. The gift of faith goes forth from him, and is received into the heart. Now both by the gift itſelf, and by the exerciſe of it, is the juſtification; by receiving of the gift is the perſon juſtified; by the exerciſe of the gift are all his actions juſtified. Chriſt being let into the heart, juſtifies the heart into which he is received;

and Chriſt being in the heart, juſtifies every motion and action that comes from his life; and any other motion or action is not juſtified; for it is out of that which is juſtified, and is in and from that which is condemned.

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto "him for righteouſneſs," ver. 3. God promiſed him a ſeed; he believed God. God bid him ſacrifice this type; he believed. This was it which was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs. Now if he had not believed; if he had not received the gift, or not exerciſed the gift, could he have been righteous? So that Abraham was not juſtified by any work he did, or could do; but by receiving and exerciſing the faith in the ſeed: by going out of his country, kindred, and father's houſe, not of himſelf, but by faith, and by living to God, and obeying his voice in that land to which he was led; not in his own will or power, but in the faith. And by hearing the call of God, and receiving the faith, and living out of ſelf, out of a man's own underſtanding, will, and power, in the faith, and living power, and wiſdom of God, is the juſtification now: and they that do thus are children of Abraham, born of the free woman; when-as they who take up practices from the letter, without being ingrafted into the life, are but children of the bond-woman; but ſuch children of Abraham as the Jews were (if ſo much); and cannot inherit that promiſe which belongs to the ſpiritual ſeed, while they live in that ſtate.

13. That where the faith which is imputed unto righteouſneſs is found, there "ſin is not imputed, but "covered;" which is a bleſſed ſtate, ver. 6, 7, 8. Sin cuts off from God, who is life and bleſſedneſs. Sin lays open to the wrath of the Creator, which is too great for the creature to bear. Wo and miſery will be his portion to whom God imputes ſin; but happy is he who has his ſin covered! This is a happy condition; life and immortality will ſoon be opened to him. Now this bleſſedneſs cometh not by the works of the law, for they cannot remove the ſin; but by the righteouſneſs of faith, which is able to cover the ſin even from

from the pure eye of God. O Chriſtians, Chriſtians! do not imagine yourſelves covered from ſin; but know it, feel it; never reſt till ye are ſo made partakers of the true righteouſneſs, that, by its virtue in you, ye may be paſt all doubt that it is it. Believing from the letter without you that ye are juſtified, may eaſily deceive you; but if once you come truly to feel in yourſelves the thing which juſtifies, and ſo find the power and life of it in you, above the power of all that which condemns, caſting out the condemned thing, and the condemner, with all his works, out of your hearts; this cannot deceive. The virtue of life was loſt in the apoſtaſy; and that which was living did not ſo much enjoy life as mourn after it; and the power and ſafety of life did then appear moſt in mourning; but now the apoſtaſy draws towards an end, and the virtue begins to ſhoot up again; and he that will be a Chriſtian now, muſt be ſo, not by retaining his old notions, but by feeling this new virtue, and by growing up in this new-ſprung life and power of the Lord, whoſe appearance is new to us, who have not been acquainted with it, but have been brought up in the darkneſs of the apoſtaſy, and lived in the waters where great leviathan ruled, and who was able to make war with him there? But he that ſeeketh, is joined with, and keepeth to, that power which drieth up the waters, and putteth an hook into the noſtrils of the leviathan; ſhall find the world, with the whole courſe of it, ending in himſelf, and the beginning and growth of an endleſs life; and in whom that life lives, they ſhall live alſo; but where death keeps the power of life down, ſuch ſhall not live, or know the bleſſing, but abide under the curſe of miſery and death, and under the powers of darkneſs. Therefore look about you, and make a wiſe choice; for his ſervants ye are whom ye obey, whether the prince of darkneſs, in his invented forms of godlineſs, or the prince of light, in the living power; and your reward ſhall be according to your choice and work, either death in the death, if ye chuſe and join to that; or life in the life, if ye join to that. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.

THE

THE

SCATTERED SHEEP

SOUGHT AFTER.

FIRST,

In a LAMENTATION over the GENERAL Loss of the Powerful PRESENCE of GOD in his People ſince the Days of the APOSTLES; with a particular Bewailing of the Withering and Death of thoſe precious Buddings-forth of Life, which appeared in many at the Beginning of the late Troubles in theſe Nations; with the proper Way of Recovery for ſuch.

SECONDLY,

In ſome PROPOSITIONS concerning the ONLY WAY OF SALVATION; where is an ANSWER given to that great OBJECTION, that the Light which convinceth of Sin, is the Light of a natural Conſcience; and a brief Account rendered of the Ground of Mens underſtanding Scriptures.

THIRDLY,

In expoſing to View the FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE of the GOSPEL, upon which the REDEEMED SPIRIT is built.

FOURTHLY,

And in ſome QUESTIONS and ANSWERS (by way of CATECHISM, for the ſake of the Simple-hearted) directing to that Principle, and fixing in it.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

When Ephraim ſpake trembling, he exalted himſelf in Iſrael; but when he offended in Baal, he died. And now they ſin more and more, &c. therefore they ſhall be as the morning cloud, as the early dew, &c. Hoſ. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

Yea, his ſpring ſhall become dry, and his fountain ſhall be dried up. Ver. 15.

We have all been as ſheep going aſtray; but bleſſed be the everlaſting arm which hath gathered any of us to the ſhepherd and biſhop of our ſouls.

O come to the fold; O ſcattered ſheep, come to the fold. Wander no longer from mountain to hill; but remember your reſting-place, the old reſting-place of Iſrael, even the mountain of the Lord's houſe, where Iſrael may lie down and feed in peace, and no ravenous beaſt can diſturb.

O houſe of Jacob, let whoredom, wine, and new wine no longer ſteal away your hearts; but come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

THE

PREFACE.

"MY people have committed two great evils; they "have forſaken me, the fountain of living waters, "and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can "hold no water." This was ever and anon the complaint of the Lord concerning Iſrael, from the beginning to the end. The Lord did delight to beget, nouriſh, and bring up that people for himſelf; but they were almoſt continually revolting from him, and rebelling againſt him. He did mighty things for them; but they ſtill forgot him. He redeemed them by his outſtretched arm; he fed them, he defended them; but they knew him not, Iſaiah i. 3. but decked themſelves with the ornaments which they had from him, and then lift up the heel againſt him, Ezek. xvi. 7. and Deut. xxxii. 15. In plain terms, they got what knowledge they could from him into their own veſſels, and then they would ſet up for themſelves, live of themſelves, without freſh bubblings up of life from the ſpring, from whence their knowledge came. The prieſts ſaid not, Where is the Lord? but could handle the law, and teach the knowledge of it without him; and the prophets could propheſy by another ſpirit, Jer. ii. 8. And thus the Lord God of life lived not in them; but they lived upon ſuch things as once came from the life; but, being ſeparated from the ſpring, were dead, and nouriſhed but the dead part in them, the

the eſtranged from God. And thus, though their profeſſions were great, and they multiplied prayers, ſacrifices, and faſts, and drew nigh to God with their lips, yet their hearts were far from him. They had forſaken the fountain; they drank not of the waters of the ſpring, of the rock that followed them; but they drank of the waters of their own ciſterns. They ſet up that knowledge of the law for their light which they had hewed out with the tools of their own underſtanding, without the ſpirit that wrote it. This was Iſrael's error of old: they drank very zealouſly of the waters of the law; but they drank it not from the ſpring, but out of the ciſterns which themſelves had hewed.

And as it was thus with Iſrael of old, ſo hath it been with Iſrael ſince. The Chriſtian Iſrael hath been always backſliding, always forgetting the Lord! ſtill getting what they could from him to live of themſelves, but refuſing to live on him: getting what knowledge they could from the ſcriptures without him; getting what they could from their exerciſes and experiences; but neglecting the ſpring of their life. And ſo this Iſrael alſo dies; this Iſrael likewiſe withers, and becomes a ſcorn to the heathen. For though they ſpeak great words of their God; yet they themſelves are but as the heathen; uncircumciſed like them; unacquainted with the virtue and power of life like them; always ſtriving againſt ſin in that which cannot conquer; and ſo they alſo are ſlaves under their luſts and corruptions, like the heathen, and know not the truth, which makes free indeed.

Exceeding great hath been the apoſtaſy of this age! mighty was the appearance of God inwardly in his people's ſpirits! mighty was the appearance of God outwardly in the nation! many ways and great hopes there were of a thorough reformation. But how ſuddenly was the pure ſpirit of the Lord forgotten, and departed from, and his work overturned both within and without; inwardly in his people's ſpirits, and outwardly in the nation, whoſe revolting was but a type of

of the inward! and how hath the ſpirit of the Lord mourned after his people, often reproving them for their backſlidings! but they have been (as Iſrael of old) like the deaf adder, juſtifying themſelves, and complaining againſt the witneſſes of God (as Iſrael did againſt his prophets) who from the Lord teſtify againſt them. And it cannot be otherwiſe; for the dead waters in Iſrael's hewn ciſterns will never agree with the waters of the living fountain, but will withſtand their teſtimony.

How ſhall the charmer charm wiſely enough to make apoſtate Iſrael hearken to his voice! I have not backſlidden, ſaith one in one form; I have not backſlidden, ſaith another in another form: I have not backſlidden, ſaith one in one notion; I am not backſlidden, ſaith another in another notion: I am believing, hoping, and waiting in what the Lord hath already revealed, and following on to know him. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedſt not my word; but ſtill haſt been juſtifying thyſelf as if thou hadſt obeyed. And yet your backſlidings are written upon your foreheads, as with the point of a diamond. For who among you retains his freſhneſs? An evident demonſtration that ye are departed from the ſpring, and hold your knowledge, experiences, and hopes in the dead part; and your choiceſt prop of comfort is the remembrance of what ye once had. Ah poor, barren, dead ſouls, is this your beſt ſupport! return, return; enter into the houſe of mourning, and let the living lay it to heart.

THE

THE SCATTERED SHEEP SOUGHT AFTER.

A LAMENTATION; with a Call to Mourning and Lamentation, &c.

O ISRAEL, the royal ſeed, the plant of renown, the living offſpring of eternity! O daughter of Sion, who didſt once ſhine with the beauty and glory of life, what is become of thee! How art thou held captive, and chained up in Babylon! How doſt thou lie ſullied among the pots! How are the wings of thy dove clipped! How art thou covered and polluted with the filth of the whole earth!

O take up a lamentation, weep, O Iſrael! mourn, O daughter of Jeruſalem! bewail thy widowhood, thy deſolation, thy loſs of huſband, thy ſad captivity, thy baniſhment out of thine own land, and thy thraldom in the land of thine enemy!

What is become of thy God, the mighty God of Jacob, whoſe out-ſtretched arm hath been able to ſave and redeem his ſeed out of bondage? What enemy hath been able to ſtand before him? What wild boar out of the wood, or wild beaſt out of the foreſt, was able to break into his vineyard, while he kept the fence? Where is that arm that ſmote Rahab, and ſlew the dragon? Where is that hook that he was wont to put into the noſtrils of the leviathan? Pharaoh is alive

alive, the wife Egyptians have power, Egypt holds the ſeed in bondage; Gebal, Ammon, and Amaleck, the Philiſtines, with the inhabitants of Tyre, are all able to ſmite Iſrael, and to ſtop up the well-ſprings of life. Awake, O arm of the Lord! and awaken Iſrael, that thou again mayeſt become his ſaviour in the ſight of all the nations; and let all the houſe of Iſrael, being awakened, mourn in the ſpirit of the Lord after the Lord.

What is become of thy Meſſiah, the Lord's anointed, the captain of the Lord's hoſt, the angel of the covenant of life; who was wont to go in and out before thee in fighting the Lord's battles; who was thy prince and ſaviour in the land of peace and reſt; who walked in the midſt of the candleſticks; who was thy king, thy ſhepherd, thy temple wherein thou worſhippedſt, and the eternal light of thy life in the land of the living?

What is become of that holy ſpirit which quickened thee to God, and which lived in thee being quickened; which kept thee alive in him that liveth, and made thee taſte the ſweetneſs of life continually? Where is the anointing which ſuppled thee all over with the oil of gladneſs and ſalvation? Where is the comforter that refreſhed thy ſpirit continually, and led thee into all truth, teaching thee all the things of God according to thy meaſure of growth in the life? Where is the ſpirit of thy father, which ſpirited thee with thy father's nature, which begat and brought forth the life, power, glory, majeſty, eternity of thy father in thee?

What is become of Sion, the holy mount, whereon thou waſt built? Sion, the fortreſs of holineſs, where is it? What is become of Jeruſalem, the holy city, thy mother, whereof thou waſt born? What is become of that covenant of life, in whoſe womb thou waſt begotten and brought forth, and by whoſe milk and breath thou waſt afterwards nouriſhed and brought up.

Where are all the fruits of the holy land; the pleaſant grapes, the ſweet figs, the precious olives that yielded wine and oil to make the heart glad, and to refreſh the countenance of the Lord of life? Where is the joy in the Lord, the obedience to the Lord, the praying, the praiſing, the living, the walking in his ſpirit, the entering into and bringing forth fruit in his pure underſtanding, and in his holy and unſpotted will, and moving in the purified heart?

Alas, alas! Babylon has prevailed; her king hath reigned; Sion hath been held in bonds; and that which hath ſprung up under her name, hath been the filthy offspring of Babylon, the ſeed of the mother of harlots; and theſe have brought forth four fruit, loathſome fruit, finely painted to the view of that eye which cannot ſearch into it, but loathſome in its nature. This has been the ſtate of the apoſtaſy ſince the days of the apoſtles, wherein that which hath not been of God hath reigned, and that which hath been of God hath ſuffered, and been reproached as if it had not been of God, and hath panted and mourned after the ſpringing up of the ſpring of its life, and its gathering into it.

The deep ſenſe of this hath afflicted my ſoul from my tender years; the eternal witneſs awakening in me, and the eternal light manifeſting the darkneſs all along unto me; though I knew not that it was the light, but went about to meaſure its appearances in me by words which itſelf had formerly ſpoken to others, and ſo ſet up my own underſtanding and comprehenſion as the meaſure, although I did not then perceive or think that I did ſo. Thus continually, through ignorance, I ſlew the life, and ſold myſelf for a thing of nothing, even for ſuch an appearance of life as my underſtanding part could judge moſt agreeable to ſcriptures. This the Lord blew upon, though its comelineſs was unutterable (the life ſtill feeding my ſpirit underneath, from whence ſprang an inward beauty and freſhneſs). Then ſuch a day, or rather night, of darkneſs and diſtreſs overtook me, as would make the hardeſt

hardeſt heart melt to hear the relation of; yet the Lord was in that darkneſs, and he preſerved me, and was forming of me to himſelf; and the taſte I had then of him was far beyond whatever I had known in the pureſt ſtrain of my religion formerly. And the Lord powerfully ſhut up my underſtanding, and preſerved my life from the betrayer; but yet that was not perfectly deſtroyed in me upon which the tempter might work: and the Lord ſuffered him to lay a ſnare, and my feet were entangled unawares, inſomuch as the ſimplicity was betrayed, and the fleſhly part grew wiſe, by thoſe exerciſes wherewith the Lord had tried me. This poiſoned me; this hurt me; this ſtruck at the root of my life, and death inſenſibly grew upon me. The devil, the envious ſeedſman, cozened me with the image of that, which before I had had in the truth, opening my underſtanding part (by the ſubtilty of temptation and deceit) which the Lord had been deſtroying; and letting that in, which the Lord had ſhut out: and then the Lord took away and ſhut up from that part that which before he had opened to the ſeed, whereby the way of life became ſtopped, and the way of death opened in a myſtery. And then I could talk of univerſal love, of ſpiritual liberty, &c. and wait for the glorious appearance of life, having loſt that which formerly gave me the ſenſe of its nature; yea, at length I could ſeek to the creatures for what they could yield, and ſtrive to rub out the time of my miſery without the immediate preſence of the life of the Creator. And as for this deſpicable people, whom I now own in the Lord, I could meaſure them, I could fathom them, I could own their ſtanding; and yet ſee their ſhortneſs; and could, with ſatisfaction to my ſpirit, write death upon them, as the end of that diſpenſation of life into which I ſaw them enter, and in part entered. Here was my ſtanding when the Lord drew his ſword upon me, and ſmote me in the very inmoſt of my ſoul; by which ſtroke (lying ſtill a while under it) my eyes came to be opened; and then I ſaw the blindneſs of that eye

which was able to see so far, and the narrowness of that heart and spirit which was so large and vast in comprehending: and my soul bowed down to the Lord to slay this, to starve this, to make a fool of this; yea, my desire was, to present sense, as great after the death of this, as after the enjoyment of life in the Lord.

And now this hath opened a fresh spring of sorrow in me, a mourning over the just-one, which hath been slain by me. O how cruelly, how often have I murdered that which came to give me life! How often have I sought to have my own understanding, my own comprehension, my own will and affections in religion, live, and the righteous, pure, immortal principle die! though I did not then call it my own, as other men do not now; but took it to be of God, and to be the thing that was to live. For I also was deceived, and thought the bastard (which was a false conception) was to inherit; not knowing him to be the bastard, but taking him for the right heir. And my soul is exceedingly enlarged in me towards those who at this day lie under the power of the same deceit; who have slain the Lord of life as well as I, and in whom the contrary nature lives under a covering; who cannot possibly see that this, which now lives in them, is not the heir, until the same eye be opened in them.

The life that was stirring at the beginning of the trouble of these nations was very precious. It did unite to God; it did unite to one another; it kindled an universal sense of the captivity, of the bondage, of the great oppression of Israel, and a joint cry went up to God for deliverance. And God heard the cry, and arose to deliver, and did begin to break the yoke, both outwardly in the nation, and inwardly in people's spirits.

But the tempter did also set himself on work again to entangle Israel. For this end he brings forth likenesses of that which Israel desired, and was seeking after. He brings forth several forms of worship, to allure some with; several sorts of notions, to allure others with; several fresh appearances of life, of love,

of

of liberty, to tempt the people of God aſide from following that ſpirit which roſe up to deliver. Thus comes he forth, and prevails; he divides in Jacob, and ſcatters in Iſrael; drawing one part to this form, another part toward that form; one to this notion, and another to that notion; one to this inward image, another to that ſpiritual idol; and all from the life, all from the power, all from the Saviour, all from the deliverer, and ſo the work ſtops. It ſtops in the nation, and it ſtops in people's ſpirits; and men generally wheel about and enter again, and apply themſelves to make images like the images they had deſtroyed: and ſo the captivity returns; Iſrael is turned back into his bonds, and the ſpirit which oppreſſed him before, cruſheth him again, and rules over him. And ſo great hath the breach been upon Iſrael, that the ſpirit of the world is become hardened, and thinks there is an end of this work of God; and now they may venture again to ſettle both church and ſtate upon the old principles of that wiſdom which the Lord was ſhaking.

And now where is the people whom the Lord was redeeming? Where is the praying people, the panting people, the mourning people, the people that could have travelled from ſea to ſea to have had the will of God revealed? Are they not run into the earth? Is not the ſpirit of the earth come over them? Are they not dividing the ſpoils? The inward Jew, the renewed nature is ſunk, loſt, made a prey of; the Gentile, the heatheniſh ſpirit hath riſen up, and ſeated itſelf in a form of worſhip, or in ſome high notions of knowledge, on which that ſpirit, which knows not the tree of life, loves to feed. Some are ſtark dead, no ſenſe at all in them, but life quite ſwallowed up of death: others perhaps are ſtill preſſing towards the kingdom; but in the wrong nature, in that which ſhall never obtain: and they may there meet with ſome enjoyments; but not enjoyments from or of the true thing, but the likeneſs which the enemy hath painted to deceive them with. And they may alſo

wait and hope that the kingdom will come, and yet be out of that which knows its coming, and can alone prepare the heart for its appearance. Yea, ſome are got ſo high, that they are even in the throne. They have the love, the life, the liberty, the joy, the peace of the kingdom, as they imagine. They can reign as kings without us, without that nature and principle wherein our life lies. But theſe mighty ones, theſe princes, the Lord will pull from their ſeat, and raiſe up the humble, the meek, the low in heart, the beggar from the dunghill, and give to him the throne of his glory.

Now this my life in love ſaith to you all, as the proper and only way of your recovery and redemption, Come to that which can judge you. "Sion is to be "redeemed with judgment, and her converts with "righteouſneſs." If Sion be redeemed, if the ſeed be again raiſed, that ſpirit which hath got up above it, and keepeth it down, muſt be judged, and brought under by judgment. How was Iſrael of old to be recovered from her idolatries and whoredoms, but by owning and coming to that light in the prophets which manifeſted and judged them? Ye alſo have worſhipped idols; ye alſo have run a whoring from the Lord, and have been inflamed with idols under every green tree. Every new idol, every freſh appearance, every lively likeneſs hath tempted you aſide from the living God. When one way of worſhip hath been dry and barren, ye have left that: when ſome notions of things have appeared empty and ſhallow, ye have been weary of them; but the next new idol, under the next green tree, hath drawn you aſide into the bed of whoredom, where ye have loſt true fellowſhip with the true God of life, and have been betrayed of the ſeed of life, which he began to quicken and raiſe from the dead. Now come to that which judgeth the idol, the idol-maker, the whoriſh ſpirit, which tempteth aſide from the true huſband, and that ſpirit which is liable to be tempted; and let theſe be cut down by the judgment, and then the true ſeed of life will ſpring and flouriſh again.

again. There is no other way; be not deceived: that must be awakened in you which can judge you, and must bring forth its judgment in you unto victory, if life in you ever rise and get the dominion over death. And that spirit which now rules in you, and keeps the life down, knows this very well, and therefore endeavours all it can to keep you from owning judgment. He would fain keep the light in others from judging you. "Do not judge," saith he; "all "judgment is committed to the Son." True; but shall not the light of the Son judge? Shall not the light of that candle, which the Lord hath lighted in one heart, discover and judge the darkness in another heart? Light doth make manifest, and its manifestation is its judgment. The uttering of the words is but the declaration of what the light in the heart hath done before, and cannot but do: for as long as it is light, where-ever it comes, it will and cannot but discover and judge the darkness it meets with; though the darkness cannot own either its discovery or its judgment, but must needs except against it. Now if he cannot do this (which is utterly impossible for the dark spirit to do) then, in the next place, he fortifies and hardens the heart as much as he can from receiving the judgment, by persuading him to look upon it as the judgment of another spirit like his own, and not as the judgment of the light. And so what Paul said concerning man's judgment (that it was a small matter to him to be judged by man's judgment), the same will he say concerning this judgment. And yet, as the greatest judgment of man, in the highest strain of the comprehending part, shall fall; so the lowest judgment of the light in the weakest child shall stand: and all the exalted ones of the earth shall in due time fall before it; though now, in the present elevation of their minds, they may rise high above it, and trample it down. Therefore be not afraid to judge deceit, O ye weak-ones! but be sure that the light alone in you judge; and lie very low in the light, that that part which the light in you judgeth in

others get not up in you, while the light is making uſe of you to judge it in others.

And now, ye poor loſt ſouls, who find the need of judgment, and any willingneſs within you to embrace it, wait firſt for the riſing of the judge of Iſrael in your hearts, and in the next place wait for the joining of your hearts to him; both which are to be done by his eternal light, which manifeſts and gives his life. In the loweſt ſhining of this light there is the judgment, and there is the king himſelf, who is not ſevered from the leaſt degree or meaſure of his own light. Bow down to him, kiſs his feet, know the nature of the thing, and be ſubject to it: worſhip him here in his humiliation, receive him in his ſtrokes, in his ſmitings, and obſerve and turn from that in yourſelves which ſmites him, and ye ſhall one day ſee him in his majeſty, in the power of his love, in his everlaſting healings and embraces. And know aſſuredly, that that which will not worſhip him here, will not be fit to worſhip him there, nor ſhall not; but ſhall only tremble at the dread of his majeſty, and be confounded at the ſweetneſs of his love, but not be able to bow down to it in the true life. For that ſpirit, which is out of the life, is ſhut out in its higheſt deſires, hopes, attainments, enjoyments, ſeemingly ſpiritual reſt, univerſal love, liberty, and peace, as well as in its darkeſt and groſſeſt paths of pollution. Therefore wait to know the nature of things, that ye may not be deceived with the higheſt, choiceſt, and moſt powerful appearances of death in the exacteſt image of life, nor ſtumble at the true life in its loweſt and weakeſt appearance. And this ye can only attain to by a birth of, and growth up in, the true wiſdom, which ſlays that ſpirit which lives on the ſame things in the comprehenſion, and gathers a ſtock of knowledge and experiences in its own underſtanding part. Theſe are words of tender love, and they will alſo be words of true life, where the Father's earth opens to drink them in; to whoſe good pleaſure and bleſſing my ſoul commends them.

Some

Some PROPOSITIONS concerning the ONLY WAY of SALVATION.

1. *THAT there is no way of being ſaved from ſin, and wrath eternal, but by that Chriſt alone which died at Jeruſalem.* There is no name, virtue, life or power under heaven given, by which loſt man may be ſaved, but his alone.

2. *That there is no way of being ſaved by him, but through receiving him into the heart by a living faith, and having him formed in the heart.* Chriſt ſaves not as he ſtands without at the door knocking, but as he is let in; and being let in, he brings in with him that life, power, and mercy, which breaks down the wall of partition, unites to God, and ſaves. The Jews could not be ſaved formerly by the belief of a Meſſiah to come, with the obſervation of all the laws and ordinances of Moſes; nor can any now be ſaved by the belief of a Chriſt already come, with obſervation of all that the apoſtles commanded or practiſed; but alone by the receiving of him into the heart, who there works out the ſalvation.

3. *That there is no way of receiving Chriſt into the heart, and of having him formed there, but by receiving the light of his ſpirit, in which light he is and dwells.* Keep out the light of his ſpirit, keep out Chriſt: let in the light of his ſpirit, let in Chriſt: for the Father and the Son are light, and are alone known and received in the light; but never out of it.

4. *That the way of receiving the light of the ſpirit into the heart* (and thereby uniting with the Father, and the Son) *is by hearkening to, and receiving its convictions of ſin there.* The firſt operation of the ſpirit towards man lying in the ſin, is to convince him of the ſin; and he that receives not the convincing light of the ſpirit, the work is ſtopped in him at the very firſt; and Chriſt can never come to be formed in him, becauſe that light whereby he ſhould be formed is kept out.

out. And then he may talk of Chriſt, and practiſe duties (pray, read, and meditate much), and gather comforts from promiſes, and run into ordinances, and be exceeding zealous and affectionate in all theſe, and yet periſh in the end. Yea, the devil will let him alone (if not help him) in all this, knowing that he hath him the ſurer thereby, he being (by the ſtrict obſervation of theſe) kept out of the fear of the danger of his condition, which otherwiſe perhaps he might be made ſenſible of.

Object. *But I may be deceived in hearkening to a light within; for while I think that I therein hearken to the light of the ſpirit, it may prove but the light of a natural conſcience.*

Anſw. 1. If it ſhould be but the light of a natural conſcience, and it draw thee from ſin, which ſeparates from God, and ſo prepare thee for the underſtanding, believing, and receiving what the ſcripture ſaith of Chriſt.; this is no very bad deceit: but if in the reſult it ſhould prove to have been the light of the ſpirit, and thou all thy life time haſt took it for the light of a natural conſcience (and ſo haſt deſpiſed, or at leaſt neglected, if not reproached it), thou wilt then find that this was a very bad deceit.

2. I can ſhew thee by expreſs ſcripture, that it is the work of the ſpirit to convince of ſin, John xvi. 8. And again, that the law, which is ſpiritual, manifeſteth that which is corrupt and carnal, Rom. vii. 14. But where canſt thou ſhew me from ſcripture, that a natural conſcience can convince of ſin?

3. Let any man give heed to the light in his heart, he ſhall find it to diſcover his moſt inward, his moſt ſecret, his moſt ſpiritual evils; which a natural light cannot do: for that which is natural cannot diſcover that which is ſpiritual.

4. The apoſtle ſaith, that it is the grace which hath appeared to all men, which teacheth not only godlineſs, but alſo ſobriety and righteouſneſs, Tit. ii. 11, 12. The light of the fallen nature is darkneſs, can teach nothing of God. What any man learns now of the

the true knowledge of God, he learns by grace, which ſhines in the darkneſs of man's nature, to leaven it with the true knowledge; though man, being darkneſs, can by no means comprehend it, and ſo cannot give it its true name.

Therefore take heed, leſt (through ignorance) ye blaſpheme the holy light of the pure ſpirit; calling that natural (looking on it with the carnal eye) which, with the ſpiritual eye, is ſeen to be ſpiritual. For thou that doſt this wilt be alſo erring on the other hand, calling thy carnal meanings and conceivings, about the mind of the ſpirit of God in ſcripture, ſpiritual. And he that thus puts darkneſs for light, muſt needs put light for darkneſs; and then call evil good, and good evil: and ſo err from the ſpirit of God in the whole courſe of his religion, even in the moſt inward exerciſes of it.

Man, by nature, is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; quite dead, and his conſcience wholly dark. That which giveth him the ſenſe of his death, and of his darkneſs, muſt be another thing than his nature, even the light of the ſpirit of Chriſt, ſhining in his dark heart and conſcience. It is the ſeed of the woman which not only deſtroys, but alſo diſcovers, all the deeds of the ſerpent. Now this ſeed, this light, is one in all, though there have been ſeveral diſpenſations of it. One to the heathen; in whom it ſprings up after an hidden manner, even as it were naturally; from whence it had the name of *the light of nature* (though it be the myſtery of life and ſalvation hid in them, Col. i. 27. *this myſtery* IN *the Gentiles*; it is ill tranſlated, *among)*. Another to the Jews, in whom it was more rigorouſly ſtirred by a law given; who by types and ſhadows, and righteous exerciſes according to the law, were to be awakened to the living principle, Micah vi. 8. Another to the Chriſtians, in whom it was livelily brought forth to light and life, by an eſpecial diſpenſation of grace; inſomuch as that which was the *myſtery in the Gentiles*, and veiled from the Jews, being opened in them, was found to be *Chriſt the*

the hope, Col. i. 27. But under all theſe diſpenſations, the generality of men have fallen ſhort of the glory of God, and miſſed of the ſubſtance. Therefore the Lord God is now bringing forth the ſubſtance itſelf, but under ſuch a veil as hides it from the eye of man's wiſdom, under what diſpenſation ſoever he be, and how high ſoever in that diſpenſation. To ſome it ſeems natural; to others legal; to ſome it ſeems from the power of Satan (or at leaſt they pretend ſo); to others it ſeems the miniſtry of John Baptiſt. Thus men gueſs at it in the wiſdom of their comprehenſions, wanting the true line and plummet to meaſure it by.

Now, to you who have not waited to learn in the wiſdom of God the names of things (which there are given according to their nature); but, in the forwardneſs of your ſpirits, from your gathered knowledge, without the living power, have ventured to call that natural, which in the eternal wiſdom is ſeen to be ſpiritual (and which hath been able to effect that, which all that knowledge which ye call ſpiritual could never do), let me propoſe the conſideration of one ſcripture to your conſciences, in the ſight of God.

The ſcripture is, that in Job xxviii. 12. to the end. "Where ſhall wiſdom be found? and where is the "place of underſtanding? Man knoweth not the price "thereof; neither is it found in the land of the liv-"ing. The depth ſaith, It is not in me; and the "ſea ſaith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten "for gold, neither ſhall ſilver be weighed for the "price thereof, &c. Whence then cometh wiſdom, "and where is the place of underſtanding? ſeeing it "is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept cloſe "from the fowls of heaven. Deſtruction and death "ſay, We have heard of the fame thereof with our "ears: God underſtandeth the way thereof, and he "knoweth the place thereof, &c. And he ſaid unto "man, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom; "and to depart from evil, is underſtanding." Now conſider well:

Firſt,

Firſt, Is this natural wiſdom, or ſpiritual wiſdom, that is thus precious? What is this, that deſtruction and death have heard the fame of? Is it the wiſdom of nature? Or is it Chriſt, the wiſdom of God?

Secondly, Where is the place of this? Where doth God point man to find this wiſdom? He points him to the fear. *Unto man he ſaid*, "(he hath ſhewed thee, "O man! what is good) Behold the fear of the Lord, "that is wiſdom; and to depart from evil, is under-"ſtanding." Go to the fear; there it is taught; that is the wiſdom: learn by the fear to depart from evil; that is underſtanding. This is it which is ſo precious, which nothing can equalize or value; here is the place of it, thus it is to be learned: ſin overſpreads all the land of darkneſs; there is no fear of God before mens eyes there; there is no learning of the fear there; all the wiſdom that man can come by, cannot teach it: he that learneth to fear God, to depart from evil, muſt learn of Chriſt the wiſdom of God, and muſt deny all the varieties of the wiſdom of man; which undertakes to reach it, but cannot.

Thirdly, What is that in man, which teacheth the fear? which teacheth to depart from evil? Every man hath in him an eye that ſees the evil; what is that eye, which the God of this world doth ſo ſtrive to blind, and doth generally blind? Every man hath in him an enemy to evil; one that never conſented to it, but ſtill reproves it, and fights againſt it, even in ſecret: What is this? This is no leſs than a ray from Chriſt, the wiſdom of God, out of the ſeat of the fear in every heart, to lead into the fear, where the law of departing from iniquity is learned: and ſo this ray, being hearkened unto, and followed in the fear, brings up into the love, into the life, into the light, into the wiſdom, into the power. Do not ſhut your eyes now, O ye wiſe ones! but open your hearts, and let in that which knocks there, which can and will ſave you being let in, and which alone can ſave you. For it is not a notion of Chriſt without (with multitudes of practices of ſelf-denial and mortification thereupon) which

which can ſave; but Chriſt heard knocking, and let into the heart. This will open the ſcriptures aright; yea, this is the true key, which will truly open words, things, and ſpirits: but he that opens without this key, is a thief and a robber, and ſhall reſtore, in the day of God's judgment, all that he had ſtolen: and woe to him, who, when he was ſtripped of what he hath ſtolen, is found naked.

The ſcriptures were generally given forth to the people of God; part to the Jews, part to the Chriſtians. He that is born of the life, hath a right unto them, and can read and underſtand them in the ſpirit which dwells in the life. But he that is not born of the ſpirit, is but an intruder, and doth but ſteal other mens light, and other mens conditions and experiences into his carnal underſtanding; for which they were never intended, but only to be read and ſeen in that light which wrote them. And all theſe carnal apprehenſions of his (with all the faith, hope, love, knowledge, exerciſes, &c. which he hath gained into his ſpirit hereby; with all his prayers, tears, and faſts, and other imitations), will become loſs to him (for he muſt be ſtripped of them all, and become ſo much the more naked), when God recovers his ſcriptures from man's dark ſpirit (which hath torn them, and exceedingly profaned them with his conceivings, gueſſings, and imaginings) and reſtores them again to his people. The prophets and apoſtles, who wrote the ſcriptures, firſt had the life in them: and he who underſtands their words, muſt firſt have the life in him. He that underſtands the words of life, muſt firſt have life in himſelf. And the life, from which the words came, is the meaſurer of the words, and not the words of the life. And when the ſcripture is interpreted by the life and ſpirit which penned it, there is then no more jangling and contending about it: for all this is out of the life; from and in that ſpirit, nature, and mind, where the luſt, the enmity, the contention is; and not the unity, the love, the peace. But this is it which undoeth all; the dead ſpirit of man reads ſcripture, and from

from that wiſdom, which is in the death (not knowing the mind of the ſpirit), gives meanings: and from believing and practiſing the things there ſpoken of (which death may do, as well as ſpeak of the ſame) gathers an hope that all ſhall be well at laſt for Chriſt's ſake; though it feel not the purification, the cleanſing, the circumciſion, which cuts off the body of ſin and death here (for it is not to be cut off hereafter), and ſo gives an entrance into the everlaſting kingdom, where the King of Righteouſneſs is ſeen, known, and worſhipped in ſpirit.

The Fundamental Principle of the GOSPEL.

1 JOHN, i. 5.

"This then is the meſſage which we have heard of "him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and "in him is no darkneſs at all."

THIS was the meſſage which Chriſt gave his apoſtles, to make way into mens hearts by: this is the firſt thing that is proper for the mind to receive, which lies in the darkneſs; namely, that there is no darkneſs in God, nothing but light. Darkneſs is excluded from him, and the mind that lies in darkneſs cannot have union or fellowſhip with him. Therefore he that will be one with God, and partake of his life, muſt come out of the darkneſs, which hath no place with God, into the light where God is, and in which he dwells.

The work of the Son is to reveal the Father, and to draw to the Father. He reveals him as light, as the ſpring of light, as the fountain of light, and he draws to him as light. When he gave to his apoſtles the ſtanding meſſage, whereby they were to make him known to the world, and whereby men were to come into fellowſhip and acquaintance with him; this is it, "that God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all."

Chriſt

Chriſt Jeſus, the Son of God, he is the image of his ſubſtance, the exact image of this light, the light of the world, who is to light the world into this ſubſtance. So that as God the Father is to be known as light, ſo Chriſt the Son alſo is to be known as light. He is the only begotten of the Father of lights, the only image wherein the eternal ſubſtance is revealed and made known. And he that receives this image, receives the ſubſtance; and he that receives not this image, receives not the ſubſtance.

Now there is a breath or ſpirit from this ſubſtance, in this image, which draws to the image; thus the Father draws to the Son; and the image again draws to the ſubſtance; thus the Son draws to the Father. And ſo hearkening to this breath, the mind and ſoul is led out of the darkneſs, into the image of light (which is the Son), and by the image into the ſubſtance: and here is the fellowſhip which the goſpel invites to. Joining to this breath, being transformed by this breath, living in this breath, walking in this holy inſpiration, there is an unity with the Father and the Son, who themſelves dwell in this breath, from whom this breath comes, in whom this breath is, and in whom all are, who are one with this breath.

This breath purgeth out the dark breath, the dark air, the dark power, the myſtery of death and darkneſs; and fills with the breath of light, with the breath of life, with the living power, with the holy pure myſtery.

Now, as the Father is light, and the Son light; ſo this breath, this ſpirit which proceeds from them both, is light alſo. And as the Father, who is light, can alone be revealed by the Son, who is light; ſo the Son, who is light, can alone be revealed by the ſpirit, who is light.

He then who hears this meſſage, that God is light; and feeleth himſelf darkneſs, and in darkneſs, and is willing to be drawn out of the darkneſs into fellowſhip

lowſhip with God, who is light; this is requiſite for him to know; namely, how he may be drawn out, who is it that draws, and which are the drawings; that he may not reſiſt or neglect them (waiting for another thing) and ſo miſs of the true and only paſſage unto life. Wherefore, obſerve this heedfully.

None can draw to the Father, but the Son; none can draw to the Son, but the Father: and both theſe alone draw by the ſpirit. The Father, by his ſpirit, draws to the Son; the Son, by the ſame ſpirit, draws to the Father: and they both draw by the ſpirit as he is light, as he is their light lighted to that end. For as the Father is light, and the Son is light; ſo that ſpirit which draws them muſt be light alſo. He is, indeed, the breath of light, eternally lighted, to draw to the eternal image of light, and then to the eternal ſubſtance, which eternally dwells in that eternal image.

Queſt. *But how may I know the ſpirit, and its operations; that I may follow him, and be led by them, both to the Son and to the Father; and ſo come into the everlaſting fellowſhip?*

Anſw. The ſpirit is to be known by thoſe motions and operations which are proper to him; which flow alone from him, and from nothing elſe.

Queſt. *What are they?*

Anſw. Convincing of ſin, and reproving for ſin; which nothing can truly diſcover and reprove, but the light of the ſpirit. Darkneſs cannot make manifeſt darkneſs, but whatſoever maketh manifeſt is light. All the diſcoveries of darkneſs, in the hidden world of the heart, are from Chriſt the ſun of righteouſneſs, by his ſpirit, what name ſoever men may give it; who know not this ſun, nor its light, nor the true names of things in the light; but have named even the things of God in the dark, and according to the dark apprehenſions and conceptions of their own imaginary mind. But this I ſay to ſuch, who are ſo

ready to beat their brains and diſpute, leave contending about names; come to the thing, come to that which reproves thee in ſecret, follow the light that thus checks and draws; be diligent, be faithful, be obedient; thou ſhalt find this lead thee to that, which all thy knowledge out of this (even all that which thou calleſt ſpiritual light) will never be able to lead thee to.

And when thou art joined to this light, it will ſhew thee him whom thou haſt pierced (even ſo as never yet thou ſaweſt him), and open a freſh vein of blood and grief in thee, to bleed and mourn over him; and work that repentance in thee, which thou never waſt acquainted with before; and teach thee that faith, to which yet thou art a ſtranger; and teach thee that ſelf-denial, which will reach to the very root of that nature which yet lives; even under that, and by means of that, which thou calleſt ſpiritual light; and will lay ſuch a yoke on thy neck, as the unrighteous one is not able to bear; yea, ſuch an one as the hypocrite (which is able to hide it under confeſſions of ſin, and forms of zeal, knowledge, devotion, and worſhip) ſhall be daily tormented and waſted with. And then thou ſhalt know what it is to wait upon God in the way of his judgments, and find the powers of life and death ſtriving for thy ſoul, and daily floods and ſtorms encompaſſing and attending thee, under which thou wilt aſſuredly fall and periſh, unleſs the everlaſting arm of God's power be ſtretched out for thee, and be continually redeeming thee. And then thou wilt feel and ſee how ſin is pardoned, and how it is bound; how death brake in upon Adam, and how it daily breaks in upon mankind; and what that ſtandard is, which the ſpirit of the Lord lifteth up againſt the powers of darkneſs. And then thou wilt come clearly to perceive, how that which thou haſt called religion formerly (which flowed not from this principle) hath been but the invention of thine own imaginary mind (though thou fatheredſt it

it upon the ſcriptures, as moſt men do moſt of their inventions about doctrine and worſhip), wherein thou haſt been in a dream of being changed, and yet remaineſt ſtill the ſame in nature: and haſt had a name that thou haſt lived, but art ſtill dead; a name of being ſanctified, but ſtill unclean; a name of being juſtified, but ſtill condemned by the light in thine own conſcience; which is one with him who is thy judge, and who will judge according to it: and ſo, as that which is real taketh place in thee, ſo that which hath been but imaginary will paſs away.

A SHORT

CATECHISM

FOR THE SAKE OF THE

SIMPLE-HEARTED.

QUEST. *What is the eſtate and condition of all men by nature, as they are begotten of the ſeed of the evil-doer, and come out of the loins of the firſt Adam?*

Anſw. A ſtate of ſin and darkneſs; a ſtate of death and miſery; a ſtate of enmity againſt God; a ſtate accurſed from God; expoſed to his wrath and moſt righteous judgments, both here and hereafter.

Queſt. *What brought Adam to this eſtate? and what keeps the ſons of Adam in it?*

Anſw. Feeding on the tree of knowledge, from which man is not excluded to this day, though he is from the tree of life.

Queſt. *How came Adam at firſt, and how come men ſtill to feed on the tree of knowledge?*

Anſw. From a luſtful appetite and deſire after the forbidden wiſdom, ſown in their hearts by the envious enemy of their ſouls; who is continually twining about this tree, and tempting men and women to eat of it, perſuading them that the fruit thereof is good for food: and indeed it is very deſirable to their eye, and promiſeth

promiſeth fair to make them everlaſtingly wiſe, but ſtill faileth.

Queſt. *What is the forbidden fruit?*

Anſw. It is knowledge without life; knowledge in the earthly part; knowledge acquired from below, not given from above. This promiſeth to make men as God, and to give them the ability of diſcerning and diſtinguiſhing between good and evil, which is God's peculiar property. Eating of this fruit undid Adam, undid the Gentiles, undid the Jews, undid the Chriſtians; they all feeding on the tree of knowledge, and departing from the life in their ſeveral diſpenſations.

Queſt. *How doth this fruit undo man?*

Anſw. The wiſdom and knowledge, which they thus gather and feed upon, perverts them; makes them wiſe in the wrong part; exalts them againſt the life; dulls the true appetite, and increaſes the wrong appetite; inſomuch as there is not ſo much as a deſire in them after God in truth; but only to get knowledge and wiſdom from what they can comprehend. By this means, whatſoever was afterwards ordained to life, became death to man. Thus the Gentiles liked not to retain God in their knowledge, but fell by their diſpenſation; provoking God to caſt them off, and give them up to the vanity of their imaginations. And thus the Jews, whom God then choſe, fell likewiſe by their diſpenſation; God for this cauſe giving them up to their own hearts luſt, and rejecting them from being a people. And the Gentiles, whom God ingrafted into the true olive, in the Jews ſtead, they alſo, after the ſame manner, fell by their diſpenſation. Thus each of theſe fell by gathering wiſdom from the letter, but miſſing of the life in every of theſe diſpenſations.

Queſt. *What is the food which man ſhould feed on?*

Anſw. The tree of life; the word which liveth and abideth for ever, which is in the midſt of the garden of God; which word was made fleſh for man's weakneſs ſake, on which fleſh the living ſoul feeds, and

whose blood the living spirit drinks, and so is nourished up to eternal life.

Quest. *But had Adam this food to feed on? and was this to be the food of the Gentiles, Jews, and Christians, in their several dispensations?*

Answ. God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul: and nothing less than life itself could satisfy his soul at first, nor can to this day. Every word of God that cometh fresh out of his mouth, is man's food and life. And God speaketh often to man, shewing him what is good: but he cannot relish or feed on this, but desireth somewhat else, through the error and alienation of his mind. And what God speaketh now to man (if that be man's life) Adam had much more of it before his fall. And for the Jews, Moses tells them the word was nigh them, in their heart, and in their mouth: and Paul also tells the Christians so. So that the word is not far from any man, but mens ears are generally stopped against it, by the subtilty of the serpent which at first deceived them.

Quest. *But did not the Jews seek for eternal life, in reading and studying the scriptures under their dispensation? and do not the Christians now seek for life, and to feed on life?*

Answ. Yea they did, and do in their own way, but they refuse it in God's way. Thus Adam, after he had eaten of the tree of knowledge, would have fed on the tree of life also; but he was shut out then, and so are Christians now. And if ever they will feed on the tree of life, they must lose their knowledge, they must be made blind, and be led to it by a way that they know not.

Quest. *This is too mysterious for me; give me the plain literal knowledge of the scriptures.*

Answ. Is not the substance a mystery? Is not the life there? The letter of any dispensation killeth: it is the spirit alone that giveth life. A man may read the letter of the scriptures diligently, and gather a large knowledge therefrom, and feed greedily thereon;

on; but it is only the dead ſpirit which ſo feeds, but the ſoul underneath is lean, barren, hungry, and unſatisfied, which when it awakes, it will feel.

Queſt. *But may not the dead ſpirit as well imagine myſteries in every thing, and feed thereon?*

Anſw. Yea it may; and the error here is greater than the former: but in waiting in the humility and fear, to have the true eye opened, and the true myſtery revealed to the humble and honeſt heart, and in receiving of that in the demonſtration of the ſpirit, out of the wiſdom of the fleſh, here is no error; but the true knowledge, which ſprings from life, and brings life.

Queſt. *How may I come at this myſtery?*

Anſw. There is but one key can open it; but one hand can turn that key; and but one veſſel, but one heart, but one ſpirit, which can receive the knowledge.

Queſt. *How may I come by that heart?*

Anſw. As thou, being touched with the enemy, didſt let him in, and didſt not thruſt him by, with the power of that life which was ſtronger than he, and nearer to thee; even ſo now, when thou art touched and drawn by thy friend (who is nigh), and thereby findeſt the beginning of virtue entering into thee, give up in and by that life and virtue, and wait for more; and ſtill as thou feeleſt that following, calling, and growing upon thee, follow on in it, and it will lead thee in a wonderful way out of the land of death and darkneſs, where thy ſoul hath been a captive, into the land of life and perfect liberty.

Queſt. *But can I do any thing toward my own ſalvation?*

Anſw. Of thyſelf thou canſt not: but in the power of him that worketh both to will and to do, thou mayſt do a little at firſt: and as that power grows in thee, thou wilt be able to will more, and to do more, even until nothing become too hard for thee. And when thou haſt conquered all, ſuffered all, performed all; thou ſhalt ſee, and be able underſtand-

ingly to say, thou hast done nothing; but the eternal virtue, life, and power, hath wrought all in thee.

Quest. *I perceive, by what is said, that there is a Saviour; one which hath virtue, life, and power in him to save; but how may I meet with him?*

Answ. Yea, he that made man pitieth him, and is not willing that he should perish in the pit into which he fell, but hath appointed one to draw him out, and save him.

Quest. *Who is this Saviour?*

Answ. He is the tree of life I have spoken of all this while, whose leaves have virtue in them to heal the nations. He is the plant of righteousness, the plant of God's right hand (hast thou ever known such a plant in thee, planted there by the right hand of God)? He is the resurrection and the life, which raiseth the dead soul, and causeth it to live. He is the spiritual manna, whereupon the quickened soul feeds. Yea, his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, which he that is raised up in the life feeds on, and findeth the living virtue in them, which satisfieth and nourisheth up his immortal soul.

Quest. *But hath not this Saviour a name? What is his name?*

Answ. It were better for thee to learn his name by feeling his virtue and power in thy heart, than by rote. Yet, if thou canst receive it, this is his name, *the Light*; *the Light of the World*; a light to enlighten the Gentiles, that he may convert and make them God's Israel, and become their glory. And according to his office, he hath enlightened every man that cometh into the world; though men neither know the light that cometh from him, nor him from whom the light comes; and so, notwithstanding the light is so near them, remain strangers to it, and unsaved by it.

Quest. *Why dost thou call him the light? Are there not other names every whit as proper, whereby he may as well be known?*

Answ. Do not thus set up the wise and stumbling part in thee; but mind the thing which first puts forth

its

its virtue as light, and ſo is thus firſt to be known, owned and received. Yet more particularly, if thou haſt wherewith, conſider this reaſon: we call him light, becauſe the Father of lights hath peculiarly choſen this name for him, to make him known to his people in this age by, and hath thus made him manifeſt to us. And by thus receiving him under this name, we come to know his other names. He is the life, the righteouſneſs, the power, the wiſdom, the peace, &c. but he is all theſe in the light, and in the light we learn and receive them all; and they are none of them to be known in ſpirit, but in and by the light.

Queſt. *How are the other names of Chriſt known in and by the light?*

Anſw. Letting in the light (which convinceth of, and warreth againſt ſin) the life ſtirs and is felt; and the life leads to the word which was in the beginning, and giveth the feeling of that alſo. And in the word, the righteouſneſs, the peace, the wiſdom, the power, the love is felt; and he is made all theſe to thoſe who are led into and kept in the light. And when the powers of darkneſs appear with mighty dread, and there is no ſtrength to withſtand them, this lifts up a ſtandard againſt them, and calms all the tempeſts, and cures all the wounds and diſeaſes of the ſoul, anointing it with the everlaſting oil; ſo that now I can ſenſibly, and with clear underſtanding, call it my Saviour, the captain of my ſalvation, my Chriſt, or anointed, my huſband, my king, my Lord, my God.

Queſt. *Where doth this light ſhine?*

Anſw. In the darkneſs at firſt; but when it hath vanquiſhed, expelled, and diſperſed the darkneſs, it ſhines out of it.

Queſt. *What is that darkneſs wherein the light ſhines?*

Anſw. Man: man's heart, man's conſcience, man's ſpirit. This is the world, which Chriſt, the Son of righteouſneſs, is the light of, in every part whereof he cauſeth the rays or beams of his light to ſhine at his

his pleasure; though in no part the darkness can comprehend the least shining of his light.

Quest. *How then can it ever be converted thereby?*

Answ. The darkness is not to be converted. Every man in this state is reprobated, and the wrath abideth on him. So that the darkness is rejected, and man in the darkness; but man touched by the light, made sensible of it, and following it in the life and power which it begets, is drawn out of the horrible pit, and saved.

Quest. *How may I do to find the light in the midst of the darkness of my heart, which is so great, and this seed so small?*

Answ. By its discovering and warring against the darkness. There is somewhat which discovereth both the open and secret iniquity of the corrupt heart, following it under all its coverings of zeal, holiness, and all manner of voluntary humility and self-righteousness, with which the true light never had unity; and sometimes may cause secret misgivings that all is not well, but there may be a flaw found in this covering, and in the end it may prove too narrow for the soul. This which thus warreth against the darkness, to bring people off from all false foundations to the true and living foundation, this is the light; and thus thou mayst find it, at some time or other, at work in thy heart, if thou mind it.

Quest. *Having found the light, how may I come to feel the saving virtue and power of it?*

Answ. By believing in it. For the virtue and power springs up in the heart that believes in it.

Quest. *How can I believe in it? Am not I dead?*

Answ. There is a creating, a quickening power in the light, which begets a little life, and that can answer the voice of the living power.

Quest. *Yea, if I could find any such thing begotten in me, then I might be drawn to assent that* that *(though never so small) might believe; but surely my dead heart never can.*

Answ.

Anſw. Haſt thou never found a true honeſt breathing towards God? Haſt thou never found ſin not an imaginary, but a real burden? This was from life: there was ſomewhat begotten of God in thee, which felt this. It was not the fleſh and blood in thee; but ſomewhat from above. And if this had known the ſpring of its life, and not been deceived from it by the ſubtilty, it would have fed upon, and have grown up in, the virtue and power of the ſpring from whence its life came.

Queſt. *Why then, by this, all men have power to believe.*

Anſw. In the light which ſhines in all, and viſits all, there is the power; and this power ſtrives with the creature to work itſelf into the creature; and where there hath been the leaſt breathing after life, there hath been a taſte of the power: for this came from it. But the great deceiver of ſouls lifts up mens minds in the imagination to look for ſome great appearance of power, and ſo they ſlight and overlook the day of ſmall things, and neglect receiving the beginning of that, which in the iſſue would be the thing they look for. Waiting in that which is low and little in the heart, the power enters, the ſeed grows, the kingdom is felt, and daily more and more revealed in the power. And this is the true door and way to the thing; take heed of climbing over it.

Queſt. *What is it to believe in the light?*

Anſw. To receive its teſtimony either concerning good or evil, and ſo either to turn towards or from, in the will and power which the light begets in the heart.

Queſt. *How will this ſave me?*

Anſw. By this means; that in thee which deſtroys thee, and ſeparates thee from the living God, is daily wrought out, and the heart daily changed into the image of him who is light, and brought into unity and fellowſhip with the light, poſſeſſing of it, and being poſſeſſed by it; and this is ſalvation.

Queſt.

Queſt. *We thought ſalvation had been a thing to be beſtowed hereafter, after the death of the body; but if it be thus, then ſalvation is wrought out here.*

Anſw. So it is, even in all that are ſaved; for there is no working of it out hereafter, but here it is wrought out with fear and trembling; and the believer, who is truly in unity with the life, daily changed from glory to glory, as by the ſpirit of the Lord.

Queſt. *But ſhew more particularly how faith, or believing in the light, worketh out the ſalvation.*

Anſw. Firſt, it cauſeth a fear and trembling to ſeize upon the ſinner. The Lord God Almighty, by the riſing of his light in the heart, cauſeth the powers of darkneſs to ſhake, the earth to tremble, the hills and mountains to melt, and the goodly fruit-trees to caſt their fruit; and then the plant of the Lord ſprings up out of the dry and barren ground, which, by the dews and ſhowers from above, thrives, grows, and ſpreads till it fills God's earth.

2. In this fear and trembling the work of true repentance and converſion is begun and carried on. There is a turning of the ſoul from the darkneſs to the light; from the dark power to the light power; from the ſpirit of deceit to the ſpirit of truth; from all falſe appearances and imaginations about holineſs, to that which the eternal light manifeſteth to be truly ſo. And now is a time of mourning, of deep mourning, while the ſeparation is working; while the enemy's ſtrength is not broken and ſubdued, and while the heart is now-and-then feeling itſelf ſtill hankering after its old lovers.

3. In the belief of the light, and in the fear placed in the heart, there ſprings up an hope, a living hope, in the living principle, which hath manifeſted itſelf, and begun to work. For the ſoul truly turning to the light, the everlaſting arm, the living power is felt; and the anchor being felt, it ſtays the ſoul in all the troubles, ſtorms, and tempeſts it meets with afterwards; which are many, yea, very many.

4. Faith,

4. Faith, through the hope, works righteouſneſs, and teaches the true wiſdom; and now the benefit of all the former trouble, anguiſh, and miſery begins to be felt, and the work goes on ſweetly. All the unrighteouſneſs is in the darkneſs, in the unbelief, in the falſe hope. Faith in the light works out the unrighteouſneſs, and works in the righteouſneſs of God in Chriſt. And it makes truly wiſe, wiſe in the living power; even wiſe againſt the evil, and to the good, which no man can learn elſewhere.

5. In the righteouſneſs, and in the true wiſdom which is received in the light, there ſprings up a love, and an unity, and fellowſhip with God the Father of lights, and with all who are children of the light. Being begotten by Chriſt the light, into the nature of the light, and brought forth in the image, there is an unity ſoon felt with God the Father, and with thoſe who are born of the ſame womb, and partake of the ſame nature. And here is a willingneſs and power felt in this love, to lay down the life, even for the leaſt truth of Chriſt's, or for the brethren.

6. Belief in the light works patience, meekneſs, gentleneſs, tenderneſs, and long-ſuffering. It will bear any thing for God, any thing for mens ſouls ſake. It will wait quietly and ſtilly for the carrying on of the work of God in its own ſoul, and for the manifeſtation of God's love and mercy to others. It will bear the contradiction and reproach of ſinners, ſeeking their good, even while they are plotting, contriving, and hatching miſchief; laying many ſubtil ſnares, and longing thereby to entrap the innocent.

7. It brings peace, joy, and glory. Faith in the light breaks down the wall of darkneſs, the wall of partition, that which ſeparates from the peace, that which cauſeth the anguiſh and trouble upon the ſoul, and ſo brings into peace. Chriſt is the ſkilful phyſician; he cures the diſeaſe by removing the cauſe. The unſkilful phyſicians they heal deceitfully; crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, while that which breaks the peace is ſtanding: but Chriſt doth not ſo,

but

but ſlays the enmity in the heart by the blood of his croſs, ſo making peace. And this is true peace, and certain peace.

Now finding the clods of earth removed, the enemy, the diſturber, the peace-breaker trodden down, the ſin taken away, the life and power preſent, the ſoul brought into the peace; here is joy, unſpeakable joy! joy which the world cannot ſee or touch, nor the powers of darkneſs come near to interrupt. Here is now no more crying out, O wretched man! and who ſhall deliver! &c. but a rejoicing in him who hath given victory, and made the ſoul a conqueror; yea, more than a conqueror. Wait to feel that, thou who art now groaning, and oppreſſed by the mercileſs powers of darkneſs.

And this joy is full of glory; which glory increaſeth daily more and more, by the daily ſight and feeling of the living virtue and power in Chriſt the light; whereby the ſoul is continually transformed, and changed more and more, out of the corruptible into the incorruptible; out of the uncircumciſion, the ſhame, the reproach, into the circumciſion, the life, the glory.

Queſt. *Doth the light do all this?*

Anſw. Yea, in them that turn towards it, give up to it, and abide in it. In them it cleanſeth out the thickneſs and darkneſs, and daily transformeth them into the image, purity, and perfection of the light. And this nothing can do but the light alone.

Queſt. *What makes men generally ſo averſe from the light?*

Anſw. Their unity with the darkneſs, which the light is an enemy to, diſcovering and diſturbing it.

Queſt. *But wiſe men, knowing men, men who are looked upon as having moſt light, they alſo are enemies to this light, and ſpeak hardly of it.*

Anſw. Was it not always ſo? Did any of the rulers, or wiſe ſcribes and teachers of the law, believe in him formerly? And is it any wonder if ſuch believe not in him now?

Queſt.

Queſt. *What may be the reaſon why the wiſe men formerly have not, and now cannot, believe in the light?*

Anſw. There are two great reaſons for it.

1. Becauſe they cannot comprehend it. They can comprehend the knowledge which they can gather out of the book of nature, or out of the books of the law and prophets, or out of the books of the evangeliſts and apoſtles: but they cannot comprehend the light which all theſe teſtify of. So that ſuch a kind of knowledge they can receive; but the light they cannot; for it is not to be comprehended; but gathereth into itſelf, and comprehendeth.

2. Becauſe it is an utter enemy to them. It will not wink at the cloſeſt of their evils, nor ſpeak peace to them therein. Their own gathered knowledge may ſpeak peace to them; but this will not. Thus the Jews could ſpeak peace to themſelves, from temple, ordinances, and ſacrifices; though they walked in the ſtubbornneſs and uncircumciſion of their hearts, reſiſting the checks and motions of the Holy Spirit there. And thus the Chriſtians can ſpeak peace to themſelves, from a belief and hope through Chriſt's dying at Jeruſalem (though they know not him in them, and are at a diſtance, and not one with that in their hearts which is of Chriſt, and in his power and authority checks and reproves for ſin); but the light will not ſpeak peace ſo, but only where the virtue of the living blood is felt, cleanſing away ſin.

Queſt. *But there are many profeſſors, ſtrict profeſſors, who without doubt have once taſted of the living virtue; what makes them ſuch enemies to the light? For there are none ſpeak more againſt it than they.*

Anſw. Becauſe they are fallen from what they once had; for if they were in that living principle, which once gave them a true taſte of life through the ſcriptures, they could not but know and own the light, which was the thing which gave them the taſte, and would have preſerved their reliſh, had they known how to turn to it, and abide in it.

2. The

2. The light is a witneſs againſt all their knowledge and religious practices, and imitations from the ſcripture, which they hold and practiſe out of the light, in thē unrighteouſneſs, even in that part which is not to know or be the worſhipper. And can ye blame them, that, when the light is ſo great an enemy to them, they all turn head againſt it? How is it poſſible that, having ſlain and murdered the juſt one in themſelves, they ſhould acknowledge and give him his due honour in others?

Queſt. *But have the ſtrict profeſſors, who pretend great things in honour of Chriſt, murdered him in themſelves?*

Anſw. Yea, verily, as really as the Scribes and Phariſees and people of the Jews put him to death at Jeruſalem: for what they do to the leaſt appearance of his light in their hearts, they do it unto him. Yea, our Lord Chriſt, at this very day, is as really crucified in their ſpiritual Egypt and Sodom, as he was without the gates of Jeruſalem. And his righteous blood cries as loud againſt the profeſſors of this age, as ever it did againſt the Jews; and they are hardened againſt him by a conceited knowledge, which by their imaginations they have gathered from the ſcriptures, juſt as the Jews were; but the eye in them can no more ſee it, than the eye in the Jews could.

Queſt. *Surely if they knew the light to be the only living way, they would not be ſuch enemies to it.*

Anſw. Yea, I believe concerning them (as was ſaid concerning the Jews) that if they knew it, they would not crucify the Lord of glory; for I bear many of them record, that they have a great zeal, though not according to knowledge. But at preſent very ſad is their ſtate; for the God of the world hath blinded the eye in them, which alone can ſee the truth; and with that eye wherewith they now ſtrive to ſee, they ſhall never ſee with comfort. Yea, ſo exceeding groſs and thick are many of them become, and their hearts ſo fat, that inſtead of feeling the want of the ſpirit of God in themſelves, and mourning after it, they can mock at the appearance of it in others; and ſpeak contemptuouſly

contemptuouſly of a light within, where Chriſt ſaith the light is: for, ſaith Chriſt, take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkneſs; for if, &c. Luke xi. 33, 36.

Queſt. *But will not they reply, that they do not oppoſe (much leſs mock at) the light of the ſpirit, but only that which ye ignorantly call the light of the ſpirit?*

Anſw. If we have found it to be the light of the ſpirit, and to work that in us and for us which no other light ever could, do not blame us for giving in our teſtimony that it is that light. And take heed how ye reproach us with ignorance, ſeeing many of us have paſſed through all that which ye call knowledge; but our light is a new and ſtrange thing to you, and ye are not yet able to judge it.

Queſt. *But may not men obtain eternal life by reading the ſcriptures, without knowing or owning this principle of the light?*

Anſw. The true end of mens reading the ſcriptures, is to turn them to the light. The ſcriptures contain meſſages concerning God, concerning Chriſt, concerning the ſpirit; the end whereof is to turn men to the power and life, which can do the thing for them; which God, which Chriſt, which ſpirit, fill all things, and are within in the heart, as well as without. The word is nigh thee in thy heart, and in thy mouth, ſaith Moſes to the Jews, ſaith Paul to the Chriſtians. And to what end do they tell them it is there? But that there they ſhould wait upon it, to hear its voice, and to obey it. Now mark; though men could practiſe and perform all things mentioned in the ſcriptures; yet not being turned to this, they are not in the way of ſalvation: for the way of ſalvation is not a peculiar path, or courſe of ordinances and duties preſcribed in the ſcriptures; but it is a new way, a living way, a way that the wiſeſt profeſſors out of it never knew (I will lead them in paths they have not known). So that while men know not, nor are turned to, the light and power whereof the ſcriptures teſtify, all their reading of the ſcriptures, praying, and practiſing or-

dinances and duties there mentioned, are but in vain, and in the end will prove but a falſe covering, and not the covering of the ſpirit.

Queſt. *But how did men do formerly? for this is but a late notion about the light. Have none ever been ſaved that have not embraced this notion?*

Anſw. I ſpeak not of embracing a notion; but of turning to the thing itſelf, without which none ever was, or can be ſaved: for it is that alone can ſave, and it ſaves only them that are turned to it. Now if any man ſo read the ſcriptures, as thereby to learn to turn to this, he may feel that which will work ſalvation in him, though he know not its name. For as darkneſs, being turned to, works death in a myſtery, though its name be not known, but it may appear and be taken for light; ſo light, being turned to, works life in a myſtery, although he in whom it works ſhould not be able to call it by its name.

Queſt. *Then by this a man may be ſaved, though he ſhould not know the literal name Jeſus, or the literal name Chriſt*, &c.

Anſw. The names are but the ſignification of the thing ſpoken of; for it is the life, the power (the being transformed by that) that ſaves, not the knowledge of a name. And Chriſtians mightily deceive themſelves herein: for they think to be ſaved by believing a relation concerning Chriſt, as he appeared in a fleſhly body, and ſuffered death at Jeruſalem. Whereas Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; and the ſaving knowledge reveals him, not only as he was then, but as he was the day before, and will be for ever. And this knowledge is alſo revealed in the ſcripture; but they are ſo drowned in the letter, wherewith the carnal part is ſo filled, that the ſpiritual eye cannot open in them to ſee: ſo that which was ordained for life, becomes death to them, and they periſh; they periſh juſt as the Jews did; for their eyes are withheld, by a wiſdom which they have grown up in from the letter, from the beholding the myſtery

of

of life in the ſpirit, which alone can work out and ſave from the myſtery of death.

Queſt. *But did not God formerly work life in men by their reading of the ſcriptures, and by the preaching of ſuch godly miniſters as are now deſpiſed, and accounted antichriſtian?*

Anſw. When men read the ſcriptures formerly, in the times of thick darkneſs, and when ſome of thoſe (who were not made miniſters according to the order of the goſpel) preached in the ſimplicity of their hearts, according to the beſt light of their feeling and experience, the Lord pitied the ſimplicity of their hearts, and ſecretly refreſhed this principle in them by ſuch reading, and by ſuch preaching. But now this principle is made manifeſt, their reading and ſetting up a knowledge of the ſcriptures without this (which was the thing even then from whence they had their life), yea, in oppoſition to this, this increaſeth their death and bondage, and ſhuts them out of life.

Queſt. *Well, I will keep to the ſcriptures, and wait for light there, let who will follow this new light.*

Anſw. Wilt thou keep to the ſcriptures, in oppoſition to that light, which alone can give the knowledge of the ſcriptures? What kind of knowledge wilt thou gather from the ſcriptures? Not a knowledge which will humble thee, and cleanſe thine heart; but a knowledge that will puff thee up, and fit thee for the ſlaughter. While thou art from the light, thou canſt not know the ſcriptures, nor the power of God; but art exalting thine own imaginations, conceivings, and reaſonings, without the ſenſe of ſcriptures. And this thou wilt one day know with ſorrow, when God calls thee to an account for thy boldneſs, in putting ſenſes and meanings upon his words without his light.

Queſt. *I am almoſt ſtartled.*

Anſw. Many have fallen, and more muſt fall; for the ſharp axe of the Lord is prepared to cut down every profeſſor, with all his profeſſion and religious practices, and imitations from ſcripture, which ſtand not in the pure life. Happy art thou, if thou now

fall by that hand, which now ſtrikes at many in great loving-kindneſs and mercy, that he might raiſe them up again, and fix them firm on the true foundation: but miſerable are thoſe whoſe eyes are withheld till the day of their viſitation be overſlipt, and ſo they continue keeping their corrupt ſtanding, and confidence in their fleſhly knowledge of the ſcriptures: for they alſo muſt fall; but their fall will be otherwiſe.

Mind therefore this my ſingle-hearted advice:

Let thy religion be to feel the pure principle of life in the pure veſſel of life; for the eye muſt be pure that ſees the life, and the heart that receives it. And faith is a pure myſtery, and it is only held in a pure conſcience. Know that in thee that purifies thee, and then thou knoweſt Chriſt, and the Father, and the Spirit; and as that lives and grows up in thee, ſo ſhalt thou know their dwelling-place, and partake of their life and fulneſs.

BABYLON the GREAT deſcribed,

The CITY OF CONFUSION,

In every Part whereof ANTICHRIST reigns;

Which knoweth not the Order and Unity of the SPIRIT, but ſtriveth to ſet up an Order and Uniformity according to the Wiſdom of the Fleſh, in all her Territories and Dominions.

Her SINS, her JUDGMENTS.

With ſome plain QUERIES further to diſcover her; and ſome Conſiderations to help out of her Suburbs, that her inward Building may lie the more open to the Breath and Spirit of the Lord, from which it is to receive its Conſumption and Overthrow.

Alſo an EXHORTATION to the POWERS of the EARTH,

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find out? I and mine heart compaſſed to know, and to ſearch, and to ſeek out wiſdom, and the reaſon; and to know the wickedneſs of folly, even of fooliſhneſs and madneſs. And I find more bitter than death the woman whoſe heart is ſnares and nets, her hands bands. He that is good before God ſhall eſcape from her; but the ſinner ſhall be taken by her. Eccleſ. vii. 24, 25, 26.

He that is born of the pure immortal ſeed, and lives in the anointing, eſcapes the golden cup of fornication, and all the painted beds of fornication, and is not defiled with women. Rev. xiv. 4. but remains chaſte to the bridegroom.

Lo this is the city which is built up of and filled with images and likeneſſes of the ways and truths of God, without the life and power.

On her outſide there is the likeneſs of a church, the likeneſs of a miniſtry, the likeneſs of the ordinances, duties, and ways of holineſs.

On her inſide there is the likeneſs of the good knowledge, the likeneſs of repentance and converſion, the likeneſs of faith, the likeneſs of zeal for God, the likeneſs of love to God and his ſaints, the likeneſs of the lamb's meekneſs and innocency, the likeneſs of juſtification, the likeneſs of ſanctification, the likeneſs of mortification, the likeneſs of hope, peace, joy, reſt, and ſatisfaction, &c. but the ſubſtance, the truth, the virtue of all theſe is wanting to her; and ſhe herſelf is found perſecuting that very thing (where it is found in truth) the image whereof ſhe cries up.

This, this is the woman that hath bewitched the whole earth for theſe many generations, and is ſtill changing her dreſſes and paints, that ſhe might ſtill bewitch people, and ſit as a queen reigning over their conſciences; but bleſſed be the light which is ariſen to diſcover, and the power which is able to overthrow this ſtately, this lofty, this mighty city, and all that take part with it.

The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth in Sion; and antichriſt, with his city Babylon, falleth. Sing praiſes, ſing praiſes, O inhabitant of Sion! to him who ſubjecteth Babylon, with all her glory, under thy feet.

For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the duſt. The foot ſhall tread it down; the feet of the poor, the ſteps of the needy. Isaiah xxvi. 5, 6.

THE

THE

PREFACE.

THERE hath been in me a zeal for God from my childhood, and a moſt earneſt ſearch into the ſcriptures (which my ſoul deeply reliſhed, and my heart honoured and loved, and ſtill doth) for the revelation of the mind and will of God. Two things did I earneſtly ſearch and beg for: the one was for the diſcovery of the outward way of worſhip; the other for the inward life, virtue, and power, which I looked upon the outward as the proper means to lead me to. At the beginning of the troubles in theſe nations, there was a lively ſtirring in me, and an hope that God was bringing forth ſomewhat. I likewiſe felt the ſame ſtirring in many others, at which my heart was rejoiced, and with which my ſoul was refreſhed; but I found it ſoon begin to flag and wither, which forced me to retire, and to ſeparate from that where I found the life and power dying and decaying. In my ſeparation the Lord was with me; my ſoul remembereth it right well; and he had regard to the ſimplicity, honeſty, and integrity of my heart, which he himſelf had kindled in me. And though I fell too ſoon into a way of church-fellowſhip and ordinances; yet he had regard to me, and pitied me, and refreſhed my life even there. But at length the form overgrew us, and the ſweet and precious life in us began to die. Then the Lord found out another way to refreſh us (namely,

by a ſenſible relating of our conditions, and of his dealings with us, and workings in us), which was very ſweet and precious at firſt; but the enemy crept in there alſo. Out of this ſtate I never made any change; but here the hand of the Lord fell upon me, ſtriking at my very root, breaking all my life in ſunder, and trampling my crown in the duſt. Then I became a man of ſorrows (being ſtripped of all my life, faith, hope, joy, comfort, in one day) not knowing which way to look, nor what to deſire. Sometimes there were breathings ſtirring in me, but they were preſently judged; ſometimes a little glance of refreſhment from a ſcripture preſented to me; but ſuddenly taken away, and my death and darkneſs increaſed thereby. Then ſhould I wiſh, O that I might appear before his throne! for ſurely my conſcience is clear in his ſight, and I have not wickedly departed from my God, but was broken in pieces by his hand, even while my ſoul was earneſtly ſeeking after him. O how my ſoul did mourn, to ſee how I was fit to be made a prey to every ravening ſpirit! and many did ſeek to devour me, but the hand of the Lord was with me, preſerving me, though I knew it not. And though I was wholly broken, and deſolate of all that I had called, or could call, knowledge (inſomuch that I could not call any thing either good or evil), yet the Lord, by a ſecret inſtinct, preſerved me exceedingly out of that which was evil, and kept my heart ſecretly panting after the fountain and well-ſpring of good. Yea, when I was at length (through deep deſpair of ever meeting with God any more in this life) captivated by the world, and betrayed by the love of it (which at laſt roſe up in me, and gained upon me, by perſuading me that my preſent eſtate and condition did require the free uſe of it, and the enjoyment of all it could afford), yet the Lord followed me, and often was I viſited with ſecret loathings of the world, and turnings from it, and pantings after the ſpring of my life: but theſe were dreaded by me, and ſuddenly quenched by the evil part,

part, for fear of that misery and unutterable anguish which I had felt hereby; the remembrance whereof was fresh in me.

In this my courting of the world, and estrangement from the life, the reasoning part (which the Lord had been long battering, and had laid very low) gathered strength in me; and I began to grow wise again, and able to judge of the things of God, and to hope and wait for some great appearance, wherein at length I might be visited, and meet with that which I so vehemently desired, and stood in such need of. Thereby the enemy deeply deceived me, pleasing me herewith, and keeping me hereby from unity with that which alone was able to give me the sight of him, whenever he should appear. And in this fleshly wisdom I judged aud despised the true life in others; as weak, low, and not able to bring them to that which I stood in need of, and waited for. Yea, the more I considered and reasoned in my mind, and the more I conversed with them (hoping thereby to find some clear ground either of owning or turning from them), the further off still was I; till at length the Lord powerfully touched, and raised up the life in me (which by all these reasonings and consultations, all this while, I slew); and then by degrees (waiting upon that), I saw, I felt, I tasted, I handled, as the Lord pleased to open to me here, that which was shut out from me in my narrowest search and closest reasonings. Thus the Jew in me was cast off, and the Gentile called: but who can read this? I am sure the eye of man's religious wisdom cannot.

Hereby my eyes have been opened, and I have seen the fetters, whereby I have been held captive from my life all my days: yea, many of the streets and chambers of Babylon hath mine eye beheld (in the pure life), wherein the witch dwells which enchanteth from the life; yea, I have heard the tongue of the false prophet, which speaketh so like the true prophet, as no flesh can discern or distinguish between them: yea, I have seen the dragon in the temple, worshipped there

for

for God, by the ſtricteſt ſort of profeſſors. And now, in tender bowels, in the true light of life, from the pure movings of the eternal ſpirit (as the Lord pleaſeth to guide and direct) do I come forth to viſit my poor fellow-creatures and captives in Babylon. And what I have ſeen and known, I teſtify for the relief of others, that if it be poſſible (by the mercy and good hand of God) they may eſcape that miſery wherewith my poor ſoul hath been overwhelmed, and may come out of that filthy abominable city which God is making deſolate; where the pure life, the conquering faith, the ſuffering love, the purifying hope, the putting off of the body of ſin, the putting on the living garment, is not nor cannot be witneſſed, but men are only dreaming of theſe things in Babylon; where all the ſatisfaction they have, is from the pleaſure of their dream; but when they awake they will find leanneſs, and penury, and nakedneſs upon their ſouls.

A DE-

A

DESCRIPTION

OF

BABYLON,

FOR THE SAKE OF THE

DAUGHTER OF SION,

Which at preſent dwelleth in the midſt thereof.

Now, though the world be deaf and blind (even all ſorts of worldly profeſſors, from the higheſt to the loweſt), yet open your ears, and hear the joyful ſound; open your eyes, and ſee the city of deſolations, and of all the abominations of the earth (both of fleſh and ſpirit); and feel in yourſelves what it is which is to be led out, and what is to lead you; that your feet may be guided to, and ſet firm upon, Mount Sion; where the life rules over all her enemies.

BABYLON *is the ſpiritual fabrick of iniquity; the myſtical great city of the great king of darkneſs; built in imitation of Sion, painted juſt like Sion, that it might be taken for Sion, and be worſhipped there, inſtead of the true eternal ever-living God, and king of Sion.*

This is the ſeat of the man of ſin: where there is a building framed in any heart, or in any ſociety of men, like

like Sion; there he lodges, there he lives, there he ſits as god, there he reigns, there he is worſhipped, there he is exalted above all that can truly be called God in that heart, or in that ſociety.

1. *It is a city.* This is a proper parable, to diſcover the myſtery of iniquity by in this ſtate; it is juſt like a city, in its kind it is a city. In a city there are ſeveral ſtreets; in the ſtreets, houſes; in the houſes, ſeveral rooms, to which families and perſons appertain; and to all theſe there are laws and governments. Thus it is here; there are many ſtreets in this city of Babylon, many houſes in every ſtreet, many rooms in every houſe; and the houſes and rooms have their ſeveral families and perſons appertaining to them; and they have their laws and governments, their knowledge of God and Chriſt; their order, their worſhip, their diſcipline in which they walk, and by which they order themſelves in their ſeveral ſervices, places, offices, and employments, under the king of Babylon.

2. *It is a ſpiritual or myſtical city.* It is not an outward building of earthly materials, but an inward building of inward materials. As the outward Sion, the outward Jeruſalem, is paſſed away in its uſe and ſervice; ſo the outward Babylon is out of date too. (Ye need not look ſo far for it). And as God hath built up an inward city, a ſpiritual building; ſo hath the king of darkneſs likewiſe. (He could never have tempted from the city of the living God, from the city of the myſtery of life, but by the city of the myſtery of deceit). And as God builds his city of hewn ſtones, of ſquared ſtones, of living ſtones; ſo alſo hath the king of darkneſs his hewings, his ſquarings, his preparations, his qualifications for his buildings. If the light break forth, and make it appear too groſs to have the whole nation a church, or to admit an whole pariſh to ordinances, he will gather a church out of the nation, and ſelect ſome of his choicer ſtones out of the pariſh; yea, he may graſp in ſome of the ſtones of the true temple, if they come within his reach and circle; that is, if they look abroad, if they

ſtep

ſtep forth, and keep not cloſe to the anointing within, which is the great and only ordinance of the ſaints preſervation from anti-chriſt's power: for if they ſtep forth but ſo much as into a prayer againſt anti-chriſt, out of this, they are caught in his ſnare, and are ſerving him in that very prayer, which they may ſeem with great earneſtneſs and zeal to put up againſt him.

It is a great city; an overſpreading city, a city that overſpreads the earth. As Sion was a vaſt city, a city that did overſpread the nations (how did the faith of the goſpel over-run the world in the apoſtles days!) ſo this city hath alſo over-run the world. Indeed it hath taken up the whole territories and dominions of the other city (and hath enlarged itſelf further), and Sion hath been laid in the duſt, and trodden under-foot. And though many witneſſes, prophets, and martyrs, have mourned over her, yet none have been able to raiſe up the tabernacle of David, which hath fallen down, nor to recover Sion to this day; but Babylon hath had the power over her. Look with the true eye, and behold how all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, have been drunk with ſome or other of the mixtures of this falſe woman's cup (ſome of them over, and over, and over again), and have been inhabitants of this city, crying her up (though not all in her groſs habit, but ſome in her more refined ſhapes and transformings) for the true church, for Sion; whereas, alas! ſhe hath only Sion's dreſs, Sion's ſhape, Sion's outward garment (which is the likeneſs wherein ſhe lies in wait to deceive), but not Sion's ſpirit.

4. *It is a city of iniquity*, of hidden iniquity. That which is hid in this city, it is not the life, it is not the righteouſneſs, the holineſs of the ſaints; but iniquity, ſin, tranſgreſſion of the life. Look into any of the ſtreets of Babylon, into any of the houſes, any of the rooms, any of the chambers of darkneſs; there is ſin there; there is unrighteouſneſs there; there is not one cleanſed heart to be found there; not one pure eye

eye to behold the God of life is to be found there; but in every heart ſin in a myſtery, iniquity in a myſtery, unrighteouſneſs in a myſtery. They ſeem to be for God and Chriſt, and to be cleanſed by them; but uncleanneſs lodges in them, and ſin rules in them againſt God, and againſt his Chriſt in a myſtery; which their eye cannot ſee, and ſo muſt needs miſtake their ſtate. Yet this is the true ſtate of Babylon, in all the parcels of it; it is the unclean city, where purity of heart and life cannot be known; but though it be waſhed and transformed ever ſo often outwardly, yet ſtill it remains inwardly polluted; that which defileth keeping poſſeſſion and dominion there in a myſtery. The living water, the living blood, runs not in any of the ſtreets of this city, ſo that there can be no true cleanſing there. Nay, ſuch ſtrangers are the choiceſt inhabitants of Babylon to the fountain of life in Sion, to the river that cleanſeth and healeth, that they cannot ſo much as believe that there is a poſſibility of cleanſing and perfect healing, and making ſound and whole here, while on earth. There is great talk of theſe things (of the water, the blood, the cleanſing) in all the regions of Babylon (which hath heard of the fame, and forms to itſelf a likeneſs); but the thing itſelf is not to be found there, and ſo the virtue, which comes from the thing itſelf alone, cannot be felt there.

And here, in this there is a great difference between the veſſels of Sion, and the veſſels of Babylon. The veſſels of Sion, they are weak, earthen, fooliſh, contemptible to the eye of man's wiſdom (which cannot look for any great matter of excellency there); but the treaſure, the liquor of life in them, is precious. The veſſels of Babylon make a great ſhew, appear very holy, very heavenly, very zealous for God and Chriſt, and for the ſetting up of his church and ordinances all over the world. Thus they appear without; but they are ſepulchres; there is rottenneſs within: under all this there lodgeth an unclean, an unſanctified heart; an heart unſubdued to the ſpirit and

and power of the gospel, while it makes such a great shew of subjection and obedience to the letter.

5. *It is the city of the king of darkness*, of the great king of darkness, of *the prince of the power of the air*, who rules universally in the darkness, in the mystery of iniquity throughout, even in every heart. Wherever is sin, there is Satan's throne; and there he hath his laws, his government, his power, in every heart of his dominion. And where there is the least subjection to him, he is yet a prince; his building is not as yet there wholly thrown down; he is not there as yet dispossessed and cast out. As long as there is any thing left wherein he may dwell, he knows his own, and keeps his hold of it. It is his right, and he will not lose it. All sin, all darkness, is properly his: it is his seat, and he hath the government there. Man is the land where these two kings fight; and whatever is good and holy belongs to the one king, and whatever is evil and unclean belongs to the other; and there is no communion or peace between them; but each keep their own, and gather of their own unto themselves. And where the fight is once begun between these, there is no quietness in that land, till one of these be dispossessed: but then there is either the peace of Babylon, most commonly under a form of holiness; or the peace of Sion, in the spirit, life, and power.

6. This city was built (and is daily built) *in imitation of Sion, painted just like Sion*. The intent of its building was to eat out Sion, to suppress Sion, to withdraw from the truth by a false image, and to keep her inhabitants in peace and satisfaction, under a belief and hope that it is the true Sion; and therefore it must needs be made like Sion, else it could no way suit these ends. Every street must be like the streets of Sion; every house like the houses of Sion; every tribe and family like the tribes and families of Sion; every person like the persons in Sion; all the laws, ordinances, &c. like the laws and ordinances of Sion; the worship like the worship in Sion; the faith like the

the faith of Sion; the painted Chriſt like the Chriſt of Sion; all that go for truths like the truths of Sion; they would not deceive elſe; Babylon would be ſoon ſeen through elſe, and become quickly deſolate and forſaken, did ſhe not lay her paint very thick, and with great art and ſkill. Now here's the wiſdom, here's the true eye tried, to ſee through all the paints of this city, in all the ſhapes and forms of it; to turn from every ſtreet, every houſe, every chamber, every image and falſe appearance of truth; every falſe appearance of ordinances and ways of worſhip; every likeneſs of things which this ſpirit forms from the letter; every duty that it thus calls for; every promiſe of ſcripture which it endeavours to apply to that to which it belongs not, that it might lull the ſoul aſleep, and cozen and deceive it of the thing promiſed: here, I ſay, is the true eye tried to turn from all this, and to wait for the raiſing and redeeming of the true ſeed of Sion, and for the ſpringing up of the true life and power in it and from it: for as long as this ſpirit can deceive you with any likeneſs, ye ſhall never know the truth, nor come to the worſhip of the true living God, which alone is in the ſpirit, and in the truth.

7. *The end* of all this, of Satan's building up this city, this great city (thus accurately in the power of deceit, and in the very likeneſs of Sion) was, and is, *that it might be taken for Sion, and be worſhipped there as God*, and that without jealouſy or ſuſpicion. And he hath attained his end; his city hath deceived and doth deceive, it paſſeth current for Sion among all the inhabitants of Babylon; almoſt every ſort of people cry it up for Sion, in one appearance or other, though all do not cry up the ſame appearance; but their own image, way, and worſhip, every one extols; their own image of the truth for the truth; their own way of worſhip for the way; their own church and family for the church and family of God. And worſhipping here, they worſhip him, and not the Lord; for the Lord cannot be worſhipped in any part of Babylon;

bylon; but the king of Babylon is worſhipped in Babylon, and the king of Sion alone in Sion. Ah! how deeply do men deceive their ſouls! they think they believe in God, they think they pray to God, and hope to be owned at length by God, and yet are ſo far from coming out of myſtery Babylon, that it was never yet ſo much as diſcovered to them; but they have either walked in the way of religion and worſhip they were brought up in, in the apoſtaſy, or perhaps have removed out of one or two of the broad ſtreets of it, and ſo thereby think they have left Babylon; when-as the ſame ſpirit hath ſat down in another ſtreet of the ſame city, building up another houſe by the direction of the king thereof, and there worſhipping the ſame ſpirit as they did before; but their ſouls never knew the *fire in Sion, and the furnace in Jeruſalem*; by which the very inwards of their ſpirits muſt be cleanſed, before the pure eye of life be opened which can ſee Sion.

Now, becauſe ye are more able to receive things from ſcripture-expreſſions, than from the nature of the thing itſelf, ſpoken as it is felt in the heart (concerning which much more might be ſaid, were ye able to bear it) conſider a few ſcriptures.

Babylon is called *a great city*, Rev. xvi. 19. and *a great and mighty city*, chap. xviii. 10. O the power of deceit in that city, to bewitch from the life! O the multitude of lying wonders that are there ſhewn in the heart, to make a man believe that he is in the life! to perſuade men that the king thereof is the king of Sion! and that the laws and ordinances of worſhip there, are the laws and ordinances of Sion! that the prayer there, is the prayer of the true child! that the believing there, is the true faith! the love there, the true love! the hope there, the true hope, &c. Some parts of Babylon, ſome likeneſſes of truth there, are ſo taking, that none but the elect, by the opening of the eternal eye, can eſpy the deceit.

And it is a ſpiritual city, a myſtical city, a city built by the working of *the myſtery of iniquity*, 2 Theſ. ii. 7.

ii. 7. whereupon ſhe is called *myſtery*, Rev. xvii. 5. It is not a city of plain wickedneſs, but a city of ſin hid; of ſin keeping its life under a covering, under a form of godlineſs; of ſin reigning in the heart under zeal, under devotion, under praying, believing, worſhipping, hoping, waiting, &c. Where ſin lies hid within under theſe, there is Babylon; there is the myſtery of witchcraft; there is the painted throne of Satan; there is ſpiritual Egypt and Sodom, where the Lord of life is daily crucified. This is the city, the myſtical city, the ſpiritual city, Rev. xi. 8. And here is building up and throwing down continually. She builds; the ſpirit of the Lord confounds, then down goes her building; then up with another, then down again. This is her courſe without end, when the ſpirit of the Lord diſturbs her; for otherwiſe ſhe can ſettle in any form of knowledge or worſhip; though in her ordinary courſe ſhe hath alſo many changes and turnings; one while this or that being a truth, another while not; one while this or that being the ſenſe or meaning of ſuch a ſcripture, another while not. Babylon is hardly ever without this kind of building up, and throwing down.

And this city is a great city, a city ſpread over all the earth. "She made all nations drink of the wine "of the cup of her fornication," Rev. xiv. 8. The *woman*, which is this *city*, (Rev. xvii. 18.) "ſat upon "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," Rev. xvii. 15. She ſat upon them as queen, as princeſs, guiding them in their knowledge and worſhip of the king of Babylon. And thoſe that once hated her, and made war with her, and burnt her fleſh with fire, ſhe cozened them with a new paint, got them into her new bed of fornication, and made them worſhip the king of Babylon again, Rev. xvii. 12, 13. and ver. 16, 17. and there they lay committing whoredom with her, till the time of her laſt burning and utter deſolation; but then they forſook her, for fear of her torment, when they ſaw the ſmoke of her burning, Rev. xviii. 9, 10.

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In the temples of this city (for in all the ſtreets thereof, yea in every houſe, there are temples) antichriſt ſits as god, and is worſhipped, 2 Theſ. ii. 4. "He, as God, ſitteth in the temple of God, ſhewing "himſelf that he is God." He hath clothed himſelf like God, he appears like God (like the holy pure ſpirit of life and power), he appears in the temple of God, he ſits there, he rules there, he gives forth laws and ordinances of worſhip and devotion. Yea, if any one will queſtion his godhead, or his right to do thus, he will prove it, he will make it manifeſt in the very temple of God, that he is God: "He, as God, ſitteth in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God." He hath exalted himſelf into the throne, above all that is called God; he hath got into the temple, he ſitteth there as God, and there he maketh it manifeſt to all his worſhippers that he is God; inſomuch as, among all the inhabitants of Babylon, he is acknowledged and worſhipped, and the true ſpirit of life is hid from their eyes, and denied and crucified. *He hath ſhewed himſelf that he is God*; he gives demonſtrations of his godhead, which that eye which is out of the life cannot but acknowledge and take to be true. There is none can ſee and acknowledge the true God, the true Chriſt, but thoſe that have the true eye, the true anointing "(no man can ſay "that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the holy ſpirit," 1 Cor. xii. 3); and yet how many can ſpeak great words of God, and of Chriſt, who know not what belongs to the anointing? Alas! alas! all nations and ſorts of profeſſors, out of the life, are cozened with the devil's demonſtrations, with antichriſt's demonſtrations, with the whore's demonſtrations, with the falſe prophet's demonſtrations, which are undeniable to that wiſdom wherein they ſtand, and to that eye wherewith they look to ſee.

Now mark this: antichriſt's coming, when firſt perceived, was very mighty, exceeding ſtrong. 2 Theſ. ii. 9, 10. "Whoſe coming is after the work-"ing of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and lying

" wonders, and with all deceiveableneſs of unrighte-
" ouſneſs," &c. Weigh the thing well. Satan uſed all his art, and all his ſtrength, to conceive and bring forth this myſtery of iniquity, ſo like the myſtery of godlineſs, that it might paſs for current in the world, and he rule as God in it. *With all power*, &c. no power of deceit wanting; he did not ſpare for ſigns, and lying wonders; yea, he gave power to the beaſt to do wonders and miracles, even to *make fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the ſight of men* (which was the ſign and wonder whereby the God of Iſrael was diſtinguiſhed from Baal; power to work this very ſign Satan gives to the beaſt, to confirm the godhead of the dragon and antichriſt with). Rev. xiii. 13, 14. Theſe are the things men look for; ſee but great power, ſigns, miracles, they are ſatisfied. The whole world ſtands ready to be deceived with this. Yea, and if the eye be not opened in perſons, which can diſtinguiſh of power, they muſt needs be deceived. Signs, wonders, and miracles had their place in the firſt covenant, and were to that part to which the firſt covenant was; not to them that believe, but to them that believe not. Now after the full demonſtration of the truth by ſigns and miracles, the power of Satan riſeth up; and by lying ſigns, wonders, and miracles overturneth the truth. Now the unbelieving part in man expects and calls for ſigns and miracles, and ſays they will determine the controverſy, and ſettle the ſtate of the church again; but that part is not to preſcribe God his way: yea, he will ſteal as a thief upon thee, whoſe eye is abroad, and looketh for demonſtrations without.

And as antichriſt got up thus, ſo antichriſt will go out thus. He will raiſe up this power, and what lying ſigns, wonders, and miracles he can, to defend himſelf with, now the ſpirit of the Lord is riſen up to diſpoſſeſs him, and caſt him out of the houſe which he hath long lodged in. And he that can be cozened with power, with ſigns, with lying wonders (which are lying becauſe they come from the ſpirit of deceit, with

with an intent to deceive, though they may come to paſs, and appear true to man's eye, Deut. xiii, 1, 2, 3.) or with any of the deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, ſhall never come out of Babylon; but only be tranſlated into ſome of the more refined chambers of it, and fed with ſome more freſh likeneſſes of truth, where he ſhall ſtill remain an inhabitant and worſhipper in ſome image, perhaps of univerſal love, life, and liberty, and yet be out of the life, out of the love, out of the liberty of the truth, which ſtands in the power and preſence of the ſpirit of God, and not in the moſt refined image or likeneſs.

" All the world wondered after the beaſt, and they " worſhipped the dragon which gave power unto the " beaſt, and they worſhipped the beaſt," Rev. xiii. 3, 4. The *dragon* is the devil; the *beaſt* is that ſpirit of the earth which he raiſeth up, and feeds in men with a form and appearance of truth; to which he gives his power, his ſeat, and his authority: and every man hath a meaſure of this according to his ſtate and condition, place and ſervice in Babylon. And now what a man doth here in religion, be he ever ſo devout and zealous, and frequent in ordinances and duties, is the worſhip of this ſpirit, and of the dragon who ſits and rules in this ſpirit. I am run into hard expreſſions, very hard, becauſe the nature of theſe things is hid from mens eyes, and they are in the miſt of antichriſt's raiſing, in the ſmoke which comes from the pit, where there is no opening of the true eye, nor no true ſight of things; but truly if ever you eſpy the dragon, the beaſt, antichriſt, the whore, the falſe prophet, ye muſt look at home, and read within; and there having found the thing, and ſeen it in the true light, ye will be able to ſee it certainly abroad alſo. Now do not go about to diſtinguiſh theſe things in the notion of the underſtanding; but come to feel the life, to unite with the life, and the eye will open which can ſee into the nature of things, and will behold all in its ſeaſon; for that eye which is ſo eager to ſee, ſhall never ſee theſe things; but

that eye alone which waits in ſtilneſs and quietneſs on the pleaſure and good-will of the opener.

Now all this time, while Babylon ſtands, while antichriſt ſits in the temple, while Satan reigns over all the antichriſtian world, the true and living God hath not been known, feared, nor glorified; but mens knowledge hath been of a falſe god they have ſet up, and him they have feared, and given the glory to, in their worſhip. Nay, the goſpel hath not been preached; the true goſpel, the everlaſting goſpel, the goſpel wherein is the light and power of eternal life, to turn men from all antichriſtian forms of knowledge and worſhip to the true life and power: but when Babylon falls, and Mount Sion begins to appear again, then the goſpel is to be preached again, even by an angel, who receiveth it from God himſelf, Rev. xiv. 6, 7. for man could never recover it again: it requires a new inſpiration. "The law is to go forth "out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jeru- "ſalem. And this goſpel is to be preached "to "every nation, kindred, and tongue, and people," ver. 6. Mark: there was not one nation, not one kindred, not one tongue, not one people that kept the everlaſting goſpel; but it was laid up in Sion; it was carried with the church into the wilderneſs, and there it hath been hid all the time of the apoſtaſy, ſince the days of the apoſtles. But now Sion is redeeming, the true woman bringing back again out of the wilderneſs, ſhe brings back the true everlaſting goſpel with her; and there is an angel choſen in the power of the Lord (even in the ſame power and ſpirit that firſt preached it) to preach it again to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. And the Lord hath ſo ordered it, that he will have the voice of this angel as deſpicable to the wiſe in religion, to the zealous in devotion of all ſorts in this backſliding age, as the former preaching was to the wiſe and devout both among the Jews and Greeks. So that whoſoever is wiſe in religion according to the fleſh; whoſoever is wiſe in expectation and waitings for the kingdom; whoſoever

whoſoever is wiſe in reaſoning about it, and can tell the foregoing ſigns of it, &c. ſhall not know the voice: but he that can ſhut his eyes by the leadings of the pure life, and enter into the hidden womb of wiſdom, where the light of life is ſown, he ſhall be new formed, and come forth a child out of the womb of wiſdom, with the new eye, the new ear, the new heart, the new underſtanding and ſenſes; and keeping in the childiſh ſimplicity, out of the wiſdom, zeal, and devotion which deceived him before, he ſhall receive and enter into the everlaſting kingdom.

Therefore all people wait humbly for the candle of the Lord, that therewith ye may ſearch out Babylon, and may come to ſee what of her treaſures ye have gathered; that ye may throw them away ſpeedily, and give up your ſhips and veſſels (wherewith ye have trafficked for theſe kind of wares) to the fire of the Lord's jealouſy; that ye may receive the durable riches; that ye may hear the joyful ſound of the everlaſting goſpel, and know the true Chriſt which it alone reveals; and come to fear, and worſhip, and glorify the true God; and not go down into the pit or lake with the dragon, the beaſt, the whore, and falſe prophet, which will be the portion of the moſt zealous falſe worſhippers. And when your eyes come once to be opened in the true light, ye will bleſs the Lord for giving you theſe warnings, and not be ſo angry at us (who have paid dear for them) for our willingneſs, if it be poſſible, to ſave you ſome of the charges they have coſt us: however, at leaſt to preſerve your ſouls from that ruin and dreadful deſtruction which all the paths of Babylon lead to.

The SINS of BABYLON.

Although, in the foregoing deſcription, ſome of the ſins of Babylon have been touched at; yet I find my ſpirit further drawn forth, (in a way of ſervice to the Lord and his people) to take a further view, both of them, and ſome other of her ſins.

THE ſins of Babylon, by the ſpirit of life (which hath righteouſly meaſured and knoweth them) are referred to theſe two heads, fornication and abomination. She allureth the ſpirit of the creature into a ſtrange bed, and there it acts filthily and abominably with this ſtrange ſpirit. Now of theſe there are two ſorts; firſt, ſome more open and manifeſt; ſecondly, ſome more hidden and ſecret, hard (yea, utterly impoſſible) to be diſcerned, without the ſhining forth of the pure light of life.

All ſorts of men are eſtranged from the life; under the whole heaven is the Lord God forgotten, and his holy and pure law and way of life; and filthineſs and abomination is committed every-where. Now all this filth (even the common filth of the earth) ſprings out of Babylon, hath its riſe from her womb. Were it not for her, the ſound of life would be heard even among the heathen, and they would not be ſuch ſtrangers to him that made them; nor would they act ſo contrary to thoſe leadings and teachings of the ſpirit of God (who is the *God of the whole earth)*, which the darkeſt parts are not without. It is ſhe which withdraws their minds from the pure glimmerings that riſe up in them, ſetting up another god in their eyes, and heatheniſh ſottiſh ways of fear, worſhip, and devotion: and under this ſhe makes them filthy and polluted, unclean in their minds and in their bodies, brutiſh in their knowledge and in their practices; "for ſhe is the mother of harlots, and abomi-"nations of the earth," Rev. xvii. 5. Look what of pride,

pride, of vanity, of cruelty, of envy, of wrath, of luſt, of covetouſneſs, of idolatry, of blaſphemy, &c. is to be found any-where among men upon the earth, ſhe is the mother of it all. All the common filth and ſtench of the earth ſprings out of this womb, this ſecret womb, this hidden womb: for though, in this her open and viſible appearance, ſhe be manifeſt to the eyes of many; yet to thoſe children of hers who are thus conceived, brought forth, and bred up by her, ſhe is a myſtery of iniquity, and they perceive her not ſo much as here, and ſo cannot eſcape this her openly polluted bed.

Secondly, The whore hath more ſecret fornications and abominations. Where ſhe can paſs thus, ſhe need not paint either herſelf or her ware; but where need requires, ſhe hath her paint, ſhe hath her delicates for the curious eye, Rev. xviii. 3. She hath her cinnamon, odours, ointments and frankincenſe for the nice ſcent; ſhe hath her fine flour and wheat, &c. for the fine palate; and gold, precious ſtones, pearl, and veſſels of ivory, and all manner of veſſels of moſt precious wood, for the more ſtately worſhipper; as well as of braſs and iron for the more common, Rev. xviii. 12, 13. She can paint both herſelf and her ware, ſo as to make them taking to the eye of all fleſh. She can ſo mingle her cup, as ſhall pleaſe every palate but that which is truly living; and caſt ſuch a colour upon her abominations, as no eye that is without can ſuſpect; but takes with every young man that is hunting abroad, and knows not the ſpring of life in himſelf. So that all the deceits in religion, all the ſeveral forms and ways of knowledge and worſhip, all the ordinances, duties, and devotions which the ſpirits of moſt men take pleaſure in, are of her. And herein is her pride and glory, in ſubjecting theſe, in ruling over theſe, in blinding the eyes of theſe, and oppoſing the true life and power by theſe. She doth not value whole territories of the other ſo much as the congregation of theſe. For mark:

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The great maſter-piece of the whore was to paint herſelf like the lamb's wife, and ſo to withdraw from the true church, and ſet up a falſe church; which, by reaſon of its paint and likeneſs to that which once was the true, ſhould paſs up and down the world, and be taken for the true: and here lies her beauty, her glory, her majeſty, her life, her heart, even in the deceivableneſs of this appearance. Therefore her great care and endeavour is to keep her poſſeſſion and dominion here. She often reneweth and changeth her paint, nearer and nearer to the image and former likeneſs of truth, that ſhe might make it paſs inſtead of the truth, and ſo keep that which is indeed the truth down ſtill under reproach, contempt, and perſecution, as ſhe hath done theſe many ages. Therefore ſhe hath her ſorts of paint by her, her varieties of ſorcery, of witchery, of inchantments, whereof her cup is full, and wherewith her wine is made ſtrong, to make the inhabitants of the earth drunk thereby; that being thus beſotted, being not themſelves, but their ſpiritual ſenſes bound up (as the wine doth very effectually, wherever her cup is drank off) ſhe might lead them up and down from one thing to another, from one chamber to another, from one bed to another, from one practice and way of worſhip to another, and ſtill keep them from the true living thing which their ſouls ſeek.

For were it poſſible for perſons who did but ſo much as read in the ſcriptures concerning the power of life the ſaints formerly enjoyed, the living miniſtry and ordinances, their ſweet walking and fellowſhip in the light, the preſence of the ſpirit in their worſhip, and in their whole courſe, their ſincere love in the ſpirit, and tender bearing with one another's weakneſſes, doubts and differences, which he that reads ſingly cannot but pant after; and the ſtate of the goſpel was not to be a decaying and dying in theſe things, or a loſing of them, ſo that the power of the ſpirit, and the revelations thereof ſhould ceaſe (as the whoriſh ſpirit, which hath gone out from the life,

life, pleads); but to grow and increaſe, and the laſt times to abound moſt of all with the power and glory of truth; I ſay, were it poſſible for perſons who ſhould read and entertain the leaſt taſte or ſavour of theſe things, to be ſatisfied with any of thoſe dead ways and forms which the whore hath ſet up inſtead of them, unleſs they were wholly betwitched, and altogether deprived of their ſenſes, being made dead drunk with the whore's mingled wine in this dark night of apoſtaſy? Yea, profeſſors are drunk, they have deeply drank of the cup, and are ſorely overtaken, and their hearts overcharged with ſtrong liquor; which makes them even mad to draw others into their beds of fornication, and to ſtand up themſelves in great rage, and call alſo to the magiſtrates for the defence of them. Yea, like the clamorous woman, they make a great noiſe about ordinances, duties, miniſtry, church, &c. "(I have decked and perfumed my bed," ſaith the *lewd woman*, the ſubtil-hearted woman, Prov. vii. 16, 17.) but do not ſoberly conſider which are painted ones, which the truth. We have run on headily after theſe things too long; it is now time to ſtand ſtill a while, and wait for the purging out of the wine wherewith all our brains have been overturned, that we may come into ſoberneſs, and into a fit temper to be led by the ſpirit of life out of the bed of fornications, and out of the ways, worſhips, ordinances, and duties of fornication, into the bed of the undefiled ſpirit. Now he that worſhips God aright, muſt feel life within, and that life raiſed and ſtrengthened by him who begets it; and this will ſavour death; and, faithfully following its guide, will come out of the land of death; even that land wherein all the falſe worſhippers inhabit, and wherein all theſe falſe ways and worſhips, duties, ordinances, miniſtries, &c. are ſet up and flouriſh.

Now theſe ſecret ſins of Babylon are the ſame with the more open and groſs; the great difference is their ſecreſy, their not appearing like ſins, their paint, their colour,

colour, whereby they are ſwallowed down for holy and good. As for inſtance:

There is fornication (or adultery from the life) in the fineſt, in the pureſt way of worſhip man can invent or imitate: but the fornication doth not ſo plainly appear here, but they who have drank of the cup take theſe things for the ways and appointments of God. Thoſe that ſet up the whore's church, do not call it ſo, nor perhaps think it to be ſo; thoſe that ſet up the whore's miniſtry, or ordinances, do not give them that name, but call them the miniſtry and ordinances of Chriſt: yet this is as truly, as really fornication from the life, as the groſſeſt ways of heatheniſh worſhip. O mark it! mark it!

If thou haſt read the ſcriptures, and thruſt thyſelf into any practices thou there findeſt mentioned, without the raiſing up of a living thing in thee, and without thy following by the guidance thereof, thou haſt done this by the whore's advice; and in this thou art committing fornication, and erring from the life: for the true worſhip lies in the ſpirit and in the truth, and it is the new birth that God ſeeks to worſhip him; but the ſpirit of man thruſting itſelf into theſe things, the Lord abhors and rejects. And this ſpirit never can be thus cleanſed and fitted to enter into Chriſt's bed; but only gets a paint from ſcripture, and enters into the painted bed and boſom of the harlot, where it remains unrenewed, unchanged, unmortified, in the midſt of all its great talk and profeſſion of theſe things. And thus the ſcriptures, the holy ſcriptures of truth (which were given forth from the pure ſpirit of life) the whoriſh ſpirit maketh uſe of to eſtrange from the life. For what ſort of perſons, which have fornicated from the life, but make uſe of the ſcriptures to maintain their whoredoms by, and to bewitch others into their whoredoms with? Every ſort cries up their own way and worſhip to be the way and worſhip according to the ſcriptures; and if any be gathered out of theſe witcheries into the power

power of God, then the bewitched ſay that ſuch are bewitched.

Then as for all the abominations of the earth, all the filth that defiles the heart, it is to be found on the ſkirts of the whore, even in her moſt refined dreſs: for her religion, her worſhip, her profeſſion, her practices, do not reach to the purifying of the conſcience, but only to paint over the old ſepulchre, where rottenneſs ſtill lodgeth within. The ſore was never thoroughly ſearched; the heart was never thoroughly circumciſed or baptized; the old man was never put off, or the new man put on; the blood of purifying (which truly waſheth away the ſin) was never felt in its virtue and power, but only an apprehenſion and talk that they are cleanſed in Chriſt, from a notion they have ſtolen out of the ſcriptures; but not from the ſenſible feeling of the thing in life and power in their conſciences. And ſo the evil nature ſtill remains, the evil heart of unbelief is ſtill to be found in them, and they want the life, they want the power, they want the ſpirit, they want the love, they want the humility, they want the meekneſs, they want the patience, they want the innocency and ſimplicity of the lamb and dove. And when the Lord comes to provoke them to jealouſy by the ſhining of his light, and by the appearance of his power in ſome whom they deſpiſe, then the pride, the paſſion, the envy, the heart-burnings, the hard ſpeeches, the falſe ſurmiſings, with the reſt of the enmity which ſtill abides with them, ſtirs and riſes againſt the life and power, and their hypocriſy is made manifeſt. Yea, ſome of the ſtricteſt among them can ſcoff and jeer at the appearance of life; ſo ſtrong is the evil and unmortified nature in them, and ſo conceited are they in their ways and practices, becauſe of their cover, under which all this iniquity, for the moſt part, lies hid from their eyes. But, for all that, it is there; the Lord's candle will ſearch it out, and thine own eye ſhall ſee it, and find in thyſelf bloody Cain, ſcoffing Iſhmael, profane Eſau, the uncircumciſed Jew, who is angry that his

his brother's ſacrifice is accepted, and his not; who diſdains and derides the true ſeed of life, the living heir; who hunts abroad for food pleaſing to that nature which is to be famiſhed; who crucifies the Lord of glory becauſe of his meanneſs, and becauſe he appears not in that way of devotion and holineſs wherein they expect him. Neither will he appear ſo; but to overturn all that which ye have ſat up, and to ſet up that which ye diſdain. This is the Lord's work, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

Now there are ſeveral ſins which the ſpirit of the Lord hath charged Babylon with, and which he will reckon with her for, and with all that partake with her therein; ſome whereof I may mention. As,

1. *Her deep fornications from the life, under a pretence of honouring and worſhipping of it.* (Be not offended that I begin with it again, ſeeing it is alſo mentioned among other particular ſins of hers, Rev. ix. 12.) She ſpeaks fair words; ſhe calls to have the worſhip of God ſet up, and a godly miniſtry, and the ordinances of God in a nation; but the thing is not ſo in the ſight of God, but in all this ſhe ſeeks the advancement of her own whoredoms. And this was, and this is, the very way of antichriſt's riſing; he gets into the form, he cries up the form; and by the form which he cries up, he eats out the power. If antichriſt ſhould ſpeak directly againſt the power (without firſt creeping into, and ſetting up a form, and crying up that) he would ſoon be detected: but, under a form and profeſſion of truth, he hides himſelf, and covers his ſpirit of enmity and perſecution therewith; and here he can ſecretly and ſafely ſmite the innocent, and fight againſt that very ſpirit, life, and power, which he himſelf, in his form, makes a profeſſion of being ſubject to. And this is the wolf in the ſheep's clothing, which, by this fair appearance of the ſheep's wool on his back, covers his ravenous nature from the eyes of the beholders.

Now

Now there are three ways of fornication, one of which this ſpirit is always guilty of, ſometimes of them all.

1. *By inventing things which the Lord never commanded, or adding to that which the Lord did command.* The mind of man is very buſy, and full of inventions; and where the heart is touched with devotion and zeal towards God, the inventing part exceedingly exerciſeth itſelf this way, either in imagining and forming ſomewhat which it thinks may be acceptable to God, or in adding to thoſe things which it finds commanded. In this way of fornication the popiſh church abounds, being filled with ceremonies of their own inventing, and of additions to ſuch things as are found mentioned in the ſcriptures. The common Proteſtants alſo have been too guilty here.

2. *By imitating of thoſe things which were commanded to others.* When a man finds in ſcripture the things which ſome others did, or which they were commanded to do; and ſo he is venturing upon them before he feels the leading of that ſpirit whereby they were led thereunto. Now in this he errs from the life; he goes without his guide; he doth that which was a good thing in others (who were led by the ſpirit thereto), but in him it is fornication. This man is a thief and an intruder; he ſteals into the outward knowledge and practice, without the inward life and power: he intrudes into that into which others were fairly led; not coming in by the right door, for which entrance he ſhould have waited, and not have run on headily of himſelf. This way of fornication the ſtricteſt among the Proteſtants have generally been inſnared in, who have run on further and further to ſearch out the pureſt way of worſhip, the neareſt pattern to the primitive times, and ſo have applied themſelves diligently thereto, not knowing what they were to wait for to be their guide, and give them the entrance. And here now, thinking themſelves to be in the right, they have contracted a lofty ſpirit (and held forth their conceptions of the way as the only way),

way), and ſo have loſt the meekneſs and ſimplicity, which was freſh and lively in ſome of them before; which ſets them a great way back, and makes the entrance into the kingdom very hard to them. Whereas if that ſimplicity and tenderneſs were freſh in them, the Lord would ſhew great regard to that, eaſily pardoning this their error, and, in mercy to them, viſiting that evil ſpirit with his judgments, which ſtood nigh them, and was the cauſe of their error. But they are grown high, they are grown wiſe, they are become confident, they know the way already, and can maintain it by undeniable arguments (as they think) to be the way; ſo the Lord, with his teachings, is at a great diſtance from them; that lying very low in them, which the Lord alone will teach.

3. *By continuing in practices, to which they were once led by the ſpirit, without the immediate preſence and life of the ſpirit.* For the whole worſhip, the whole religion of the goſpel, conſiſts in following the ſpirit, in having the ſpirit do all in us, and for us: therefore whatſoever a man doth for himſelf is out of the life, it is in the fornication. If a man pray at any time without the ſpirit, that prayer is fornication, and is not either acceptable to God, or profitable to himſelf; but grieves the ſpirit, hurts the life, and wounds the ſoul. Now this way of fornication have they eſpecially fallen into, who have been acquainted with the true leadings and openings of the ſpirit, and have afterwards run to them for refreſhment, and ſo by degrees forgot the ſpirit that opened. And by this means was that life, which was precious and very ſavoury in the ranters (before they were ſeduced by the ſpirit of deceit into that way of ranting) overturned. And thus they alſo (who deeply ſaw into the myſtery of whoredoms, and into the more inward ways of fornication above others), even they alſo were deceived with the whore's cup, and drank afreſh of that wine of fornication which the whore very cunningly had new mingled for them; and they alſo are become a reproach to the inhabitants of Sion, who find

find a living habitation in that ſpirit of life which they turned from.

Now if there be a true eye opened in any in the reading of this, how eaſily and manifeſtly will he ſee whoredom, fornication, adultery, generally in mens religious practices, in their churches, in their miniſtries, in their ordinances, in their prayers, in their whole courſe! O how, think ye, doth the eye of the jealous God behold theſe things! but your eyes, who are held captive here, cannot ſee it. The God of the world, with his miſts, hath darkened you; the great whore, with her ſorceries, hath inchanted you; and ye are her ſlaves, ye are drunk with her cup; and how can ye judge ſoberly either of your own eſtate towards God, or concerning your practices in religion?

2. *Her notorious blaſphemies.* Having fornicated from the life, and from the ſpirit, then ſhe blaſphemes the life, and the holy pure power and movings of the ſpirit. "The woman which ſat upon the ſcarlet-coloured beaſt (with whom the kings of the earth "committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the "earth were made drunk with the wine of her for-"nication) was full of names of blaſphemy," Rev. xvii. 2. 3. Yea, the beaſt which carried her, which had many heads, horns, and crowns, he alſo had on his heads "names of blaſphemy," Rev. xiii. 1. "And there was given to him a mouth, ſpeaking "great things, and blaſphemies," ver. 3. And he, with the whore together (for he did it by her ſpirit and inſtigation, by virtue of the wine he had drank out of her cup) "opened his mouth in blaſphemy "againſt God, to blaſpheme his name and his taber-"nacle, and them that dwell in heaven," ver. 6. This hath been the work of the tongue, in every head of the beaſt; namely, to blaſpheme the life, to blaſpheme the true living power, in all ages and generations, ſince the apoſtaſy from the life and ſpirit of the apoſtles.

Now there is a twofold blaſphemy, which the whore, and the powers of the earth that ſerve her, are guilty of.

1. There is a ſpeaking well of the ways of their own invention, or the ways which they have imitated without the life. To call theſe the ways of God, the true ways of life, is blaſphemy. "I know the blaſphe- "my of them which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but "a ſynagogue of Satan," Rev. ii. 9. There were even in the apoſtles days, perſons who pretended to be Chriſtians, and pretended ſtill to be of the church, though they had loſt the life; and this the ſpirit of the Lord ſaid was *blaſphemy*. And what is their gathering into a church, who were never gathered into the life, and ſetting up ordinances, and paſtors? What is this? What is it for him to call himſelf a Chriſtian, or inward Jew, who never had the foreſkin of his fleſh cut off by the circumciſing knife of the ſpirit? What will the Lord ſay this is, when he comes to judge?

2. There is a ſpeaking evil of the truths of God. The true knowledge, the true fear, the true worſhip, the true ſaints, the true God, the true tabernacle, the true temple, the true heaven, (all which is in the ſpirit, and is alone revealed and ſeen there) theſe are reproached, theſe are miſrepreſented (and the true ſight and acknowledgement of them called error, hereſy, and ſectariſm) by all the blaſphemers of Babylon.

Iſrael, who had the law and the prophets, the true ordinances and the true prieſts, yet they "called evil "good, and good evil; they put darkneſs for light, "and light for darkneſs; they put bitter for ſweet, "and ſweet for bitter," Iſa. v. 20. "They were ſo "wiſe in their own eyes, and ſo prudent in their own "ſight; they were ſo mighty to drink wine, and men "of ſuch ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink (juſtify- "ing the wicked for reward, and taking away the "righteouſneſs of the righteous from him)," that there was no convincing of them by the LIGHT of GOD, ſhining from the prophets, of their "caſting "away the law of the Lord, and deſpiſing the word "of the Holy One of Iſrael," ver. 21. to 25. Nay, they

they were obſervers of the law, and hearkened to the prophets and the prieſts of the law, Jer. v. 31. Therefore, when the *overflowing ſcourge* came, *it ſhould not come near them:* yea, when the true prophets of the Lord threatened them with his coming with dreadful vengeance, and his *ſtrange work*, they in the height and confidence of their ſpirits could reply; "Let "him make ſpeed, and haſten his work, that we may "ſee it," Iſa. v. 19. How blind were they from ſeeing their blaſphemies; their calling of evil good, and good evil, &c. Yea, in the very days of the apoſtles, *the way of truth was evil ſpoken of*, and ſynagogues of Satan ſetting up, and blaſphemies growing up apace from thoſe which held the true form, but denied the power, even while the pourings forth of the ſpirit, and revelations from the ſpirit, did abound: how can it be expected it ſhould be otherwiſe now, when the ſpirit is grown ſuch a ſtrange thing, that to mention ſuch a thing as being moved by the ſpirit, or acted by the ſpirit, is become ridiculous? and the very teachers of the nation (who muſt ſpeak by the ſpirit, if they ſpeak the word of God) cry revelation is ceaſed, and count it a reproach for a man ſo much as to pretend to ſpeak by the movings, and in the power, of the ſpirit.

Now this double blaſphemy neceſſarily follows the fornication: whoever is fornicated from the life, he blaſphemes the life, in all his knowledge, in all his worſhip, in all his religion. He calls that prayer which is not prayer; that an ordinance which is not an ordinance; that a church which is not a church; that a miniſter which is not a miniſter; and that which is indeed the prayer, the ordinance, the church, the miniſter, he denies and blaſphemes; and cannot do otherwiſe, until the righteous judgments of the Lord purge the whore's wine out of him, and he be led back to that life and ſpirit again, from which (in all theſe ways of worſhip, inventions, and imitations) he is gone a whoring.

The whore, for these many ages, hath been laying blasphemy to the charge of such as, in any degree, have been led by the spirit of the Lord from her whoredoms; but now the Lord is taking it off from them (who have long been unjustly charged therewith) and charging it upon her, and she cannot escape his judgment: for though she put on ever so fine dresses and appearances, like the spouse and church of Christ, yet the Lord can distinguish and find out his spouse, though naked in the wilderness, and without her attire; and can also espy the whorish spirit, though clothed with the church's attire; and can charge her blasphemies (against him, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven) upon her.

3. *Gross or more refined idolatries.* "Little children," said John, "keep yourselves from idols," 1 John v. 21. He saw antichristianism breaking in apace, many antichrists being already come; and now (saith he) keep to the anointing, and keep from idols. Without a very strict watch, without a mighty preservation by the anointing, he saw idolatry would even creep in upon them, who had tasted of the true power and virtue of life. But how shall they keep from idols who know not the anointing, but think the revelations thereof are ceased? He that buyeth not the tried gold of Christ (Rev. iii. 18.) how can he avoid buying untried gold of antichrist, or silver, or brass, or wood, or stone, which his merchants traffick for, and make idols of? Rev. ix. 20. If thine eyes be anointed with the true eye-salve, thou mayest see and read the parable.

Idolatry is the worshipping of God without his spirit (that is the plain naked truth of the thing). To invent things from the carnal mind, or to imitate things, which others, who had the spirit, did in the spirit, by the command of the spirit, for thee to imitate and practise these without the spirit, is idolatry. An invented church, an invented ministry, an invented worship; an imitated church, an imitated ministry, an imitated worship without the life, without the spirit, all

all theſe are the *work of mens hands*, and are *idols*, and all that is performed herein is idolatry, Rev. ix. 20. This is a religion without life, a worſhip without life, a fabrick for idolatry; and the whole courſe of worſhip and ſervice in it, is idolatry. For the living God, the Lord God of endleſs life and power, is alone worſhipped by his ſpirit, and in the truth of that life which he begets in the heart; and all other worſhip, (though ever ſo ſeemingly ſpiritual) is idolatrous. Ah! profeſſors, profeſſors! if ye knew how many idol-prayers and ſervices ye have loaded the Lord with, and how ye have been whoring from him, while ye have ſeemed to be drawing nigh to him, ye would hang down your heads and mourn! for whatever ye have done, in the worſhip of God, without the leading and preſence of his ſpirit, it hath been idolatry. For the worſhip of God, under the goſpel, "is in the "ſpirit and in the truth," and required of them who are in the ſpirit and in the truth, and not of others, John iv. 23. For them alone, the Lord ſeeketh to worſhip; and the Lord will admit of none to his worſhip, but ſuch as he ſeeks. And if any elſe will thruſt themſelves into his worſhip, it is not accepted; nor do they worſhip the true God, but they "wor-"ſhip they know not what;" and their whole ſtate and courſe here is a ſtate and courſe of idolatry.

4. *Sorceries, witchcrafts, divinations, and inchantments* (I do not mean outward ſorceries or witchcrafts; they are but the ſhadow or figure of the inward myſtery of deceit of this black dark ſpirit, which appears as an angel of light, that he might bewitch and deceive). "Neither repented they of their ſorceries," Rev. ix. 21. This falſe church, this adulterous woman, ſhe hath her golden cup, and her wine mingled; and with this cup ſhe bewitches the eye, with this wine ſhe inflames the heart, and intoxicates the brain. She invents ways and worſhips like to the true, or ſhe imitates the true ways and appearances of life; and when the poor ſimple young man is ſingly ſeeking after God, from ſome true touches of his life, before

he comes to know the ſpirit of life, before he can come to be married to the Lamb, ſhe comes with her golden cup, and with her tempting wine, and bewitches the poor heart therewith, and ſo leads it aſide into her painted bed. Wouldſt thou enjoy God, ſaith ſhe? Wouldſt thou worſhip him aright? Wouldſt thou have fellowſhip with him? Lo, here is the way; here is the church; here are the ordinances; here is the miniſtry; here are the means. Thou muſt wait upon God in the uſe of the means, and theſe are they. Did not the ſaints formerly do thus? Did not they meet with God here? Did not they ſerve and worſhip God thus? Come thou hither alſo; do what they did; enjoy what they enjoyed. Yea, but thou whoriſh woman, did ever God appoint means without his ſpirit? Thou leaveſt the main, yea, indeed, the only thing behind thee, which itſelf alone is accepted, and without which nothing is accepted. And this is the courſe of the whore; in all her transformings, in all her baits, in all her temptings, ſhe ſtill leaves the ſpirit behind her. She may perhaps ſpeak of the ſpirit, to hide herſelf the more (becauſe the letter of the ſcripture is ſo expreſs therein); and teach people to look and wait for the ſpirit, but ſo as it never is to be obtained: for he that begins in religion either to pray or worſhip, or ſeek the knowledge of God, without the ſpirit, ſhall never meet with the ſpirit ſo; but that way of knowledge, religion, and worſhip of his, muſt firſt be broken down, and he become a fool, and receive the ſpirit as a fool (out of all his religious knowledge and wiſdom which he had gathered before); and afterwards, following the ſpirit which is thus received, he ſhall be led into the true wiſdom. Now mark that which follows, ye that have a deſire to underſtand.

This ſpirit of deceit, this whoriſh ſpirit, this ſpirit of divination and witchcraft ("which by her ſorceries deceived all nations," Rev. xviii. 23.) came forth curiouſly decked at firſt, with all manner of *deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs*. It had the exact form of

of life (the true form of godlineſs) and a lively ſpirit in it: it had the form of knowledge, and the form of worſhip, and with theſe it came to tempt, and draw away them from the life and from the power, who were in the life and in the power; and it did prevail upon ſuch as kept not cloſe to the anointing. But after it had overcome, and gained the church's territories, then it might ſafely corrupt the form; and ſo it did, and went into multitudes of inventions and fopperies (as at this day may be ſeen amongſt the Papiſts). Now theſe are eaſily diſcovered, and ſeen through by any ſimple, plain, honeſt eye, upon a little breaking forth of the light. Therefore the whoriſh ſpirit, when ſhe perceives herſelf found out here, ſhe changes her ſhape and attire, and comes back again by degrees (as need requires) to the forms of knowledge and worſhip, wherewith ſhe was arrayed when ſhe deceived at firſt: yet ſtill ſhe is the ſame, and doth this to keep poor ſimple hearts ſtill in her bands, from the life and from the ſpirit. And thus painted, thus decked, thus holding forth ſcripture-knowledge and ſcripture-ways of worſhip, ſhe is the more ſubtil witch, the more ſubtil ſorcereſs, and is able to deceive any eye, but that which is opened in the light. With her "Lo here Chriſt, and lo there "Chriſt," ſhe would deceive the very elect, if it were poſſible; but it is not poſſible: for they are taught by the ſpirit not to go forth, and the anointing within preſerves them. And he that knoweth not this preſervation, is bewitched by her; and his fear of God is ſuch as may be taught by the precepts of men, and practiſed without the knowledge of the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, which is the ſaints rule, guide, and preſervation. For as the apoſtles were "able miniſters, not of the letter, but of "the ſpirit of the New Teſtament," 2 Cor. iii. 6. ſo they that received their miniſtry (or that which they miniſtered) received not the letter only, but the ſpirit; and were preſerved not by the letter, but by the ſpirit, and were made able to try words, things, and

ſpirits, not by the letter, but by the ſpirit. But this the whoriſh ſpirit is departed from, and bewitcheth others from; firſt poſſeſſing them that the ſpirit is not to be looked for, and then perſuading them to make as good ſhift as they can without it: and then (having thus prepared people) ſhe brings forth her wares. Look ye, ſaith ſhe, this is the way; thus and thus the ſaints practiſed; do thou thus alſo. But thou muſt receive the ſaints ſpirit before thou either know or worſhip; or thou knoweſt and worſhippeſt out of it: and in that path of ſorcery and witchcraft from the life, thou ſhalt never meet with the life; but the further thou proceedeſt therein, wilt be more and more eſtranged from it, and become ſtill a greater and greater enemy to it, and more and more in love with the whore, and her whoriſh paths and pleaſing ways of devotion, whereby the falſe ſpirit in thee is raiſed up and nouriſhed; not with the bread of life from the hand of the ſpirit, but with words, or forms of knowledge, or ways of worſhip invented, or imitated; which do but tickle the underſtanding, or affectionate part of man, but reach not the life; ſo that that which ſhould ſerve the Lord, is there not raiſed, but ſtill bound over with the bond of iniquity.

5. *Luxury, exceſs, and pleaſure.* She is rich with her merchandize, and ſhe enjoys it to the full, ſhe takes the pleaſure of it. She builds coſtly houſes, wears rich apparel, fares deliciouſly (read ſpiritually with the ſpiritual eye). She is rich in knowledge, rich in ways of worſhip, rich in duties, rich in religious performances and practices. And as ſhe gained theſe in her own will (without the leadings of the life), and by her own ſearch and wiſdom; ſo ſhe can make uſe of theſe in her own will, and according to the direction of her own wiſdom. She can faſt when ſhe will, give thanks when ſhe will, preach when ſhe will, pray when ſhe will, ſing when ſhe will, meditate when ſhe will, bring forth her knowledge to others when ſhe will. Look on the Papiſts; how rich are they in outward buildings, in gorgeous ceremonies, in times of

of worſhip, in ways of mortification and penance, in faſts, in feaſts, &c. Look on the ſeveral ſorts of Proteſtants; they have their riches in their kind too; their churches, their buildings, their arts, their ſciences, their languages, their bodies of divinity, their caſes of conſcience, &c. They can open the whole body of religion, reſolve all doubts, expound all ſcriptures, &c. "The great city was clothed in fine "linen, and purple and ſcarlet, and decked with gold, "and precious ſtones, and pearls," Rev. xviii. 16. And ſhe ſat thus on the throne like a queen, living deliciouſly, and taking her pleaſure, to which her torment and ſorrow afterwards is proportioned, ver. 7. Yea, ſhe had treaſure and coſtlineſs enough to make all her merchants rich that would trade with her, ver. 19. What knowledge, what delicate food, could the wiſeſt or greateſt of the earth deſire, which ſhe had not ready for them? (ſee ver. 3. and ver. 9.) But Sion, all this while, hath lain in the duſt, and been deſpiſed: ſhe hath had no building, no fence, but hath been trampled under-foot by every unclean beaſt: her witneſſes have been clothed with ſack-cloth (a garment which all the lofty inhabitants of Babylon diſdain): her fare hath been hard in the wilderneſs, only a little manna (which, with the fleſhly Iſrael, who luſt after rich and large knowledge, is counted light bread, and their ſouls ſoon loathe it): nor had ſhe this in plenty, but only a ſmall proportion daily, from the hand of the free-giver, ſufficient to keep life in her in the wilderneſs, and to furniſh her with ſtrength to give in her teſtimony againſt Babylon, ſo far as the Lord ſaw good to call any of her ſeed thereunto. Now what profeſſor can be willing to fare thus with her at preſent? and to wait for her future riches, fulneſs, beauty, and glory! Nay, nay; they have ſo long lived richly, and fared deliciouſly in Babylon, that they know not how to eat the bread of affliction, and drink the water of affliction, with ſad and deſolate Sion: and yet this is the only way and paſſage out of Babylon into Sion. That which hath been

been rich and fat, and full-fed there, muſt become poor and lean, and feel hunger, and have none of the bread of life adminiſtered to it; no, not ſo much as huſks neither. And in this ſad day, and ſtate of miſery, the poor are viſited, which receive the goſpel; and the dead raiſed, which received the life.

6. *Worſhipping of the devil.* "All the world wondered after the beaſt, and they worſhipped the dragon," Rev. xiii. 3, 4. Now the dragon is the devil, Rev. xx. 2.

There is no other worſhip of God under the New Teſtament, but in ſpirit and truth; and he that worſhips otherwiſe, worſhips not God, but that ſpirit which teacheth to worſhip out of God's ſpirit, and out of the truth. Every prayer is not a prayer to God, but only that prayer which is from and in the ſpirit. Every ordinance, or duty, is not an ordinance of God, or a duty performed to God; but only that which the ſpirit leads into, and guides and preſerves in. This is the way that all the earth have departed from the Lord; namely, by erring from his ſpirit. They cry up practices in religion; duties, ordinances; the means, the means; a church, a church (as the Jews did "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the "Lord;") but they find the church, before they have found the ſpirit of the Lord; and ſo they find not the church that is in God, the church that is of his building; but they, poor hearts! frame up a building as well as they can, according to the pattern they find in the ſcriptures; and ſo they are not an habitation for God in the ſpirit, but are eſtranged from the life and ſpirit in all their worſhip; and ſo are not found by the ſpirit (which ſearcheth them and their worſhip) worſhipping of God, but "the works of their own "hands, and devils," Rev. ix. 20. For that charge holds good againſt all the inhabitants of Babylon, even to the higheſt and ſtricteſt of them all, whether in forms, or out of forms. There are many men, who are very zealous and devout in their ways of worſhip, who were never taught by the ſpirit the way of worſhipping

ſhipping God, nor do at all know how to worſhip in the ſpirit: theſe my ſoul exceedingly pities. They have received into their underſtandings, from the letter of the ſcripture, that God is to be worſhipped in ſpirit, and that God will give his ſpirit to them that aſk it. They have aſked, and they hope that they have the ſpirit; but poor deceived hearts! they know not what ſpirit they are of, nor in what ſpirit they act, nor what ſpirit they ſerve; and ſo periſh for *lack of knowledge*, the key whereof hath been hid from them. Now let ſuch conſider;

There are but two ſpirits; the ſpirit of God, and the ſpirit of Satan: one of which guides all men in their devotion and religion, and one of which they ſerve therein. He that is led by the ſpirit of God; he ſerves God, he worſhips God: he that is led by the ſpirit of Satan; he ſerves not God, but that ſpirit which appears in the temple of God, like God, and gives ſuch demonſtrations that he is God, as no fleſh can deny, 2 Theſ. ii. 4. Here now is the great *deceivableneſs*. In profaneneſs, in manifeſt wickedneſs, Satan is eaſily ſeen; and men that are found here, it is granted that they are ſerving the devil: but that he ſhould ſit as king in gathered churches, in duties, in ordinances, in ways of ſelf-denial and mortification, and be worſhipped here, this is hard to be ſeen: yet any of theſe which the ſpirit of the Lord leads not into, or which are performed at any time without his ſpirit, he is worſhipped in. Conſider this, ye that are wiſe in religion, and are diligently reading the ſcriptures, and gathering knowledge, and rules of worſhip, and applying promiſes, &c. Do ye this in the life and ſpirit of God? or in your own wiſdom, and according to your own underſtanding? Doth not the wiſdom of that ſpirit, which is out of the truth, guide you in your ſearchings after truth? O do not ſerve that ſpirit which the Lord hates, but come back to that, from which in all this ye err, and which in all this ye cannot ſerve and worſhip. And let not your religion any longer conſiſt in mere practiſing what the ſaints formerly

merly practiſed (for that ye may do without the ſame ſpirit), but in yielding up to that life, power, and pure ſpirit that they were led by. And when ye are joined to this, then do not preſcribe the Lamb the way that he ſhould go, but "follow the Lamb, whi- "therſoever he goeth." Do not tell the ſhepherd (by your gathered wiſdom) the way that he muſt lead you in; but know the voice, and follow it: for this I can truly teſtify, that if once ye come in faithfulneſs and true light to follow the Lamb he will lead ye *in paths ye have not known*, and out of the paths ye have known.

7. *Compelling of others to worſhip*, Rev. xiii. 15, 16. The falſe woman and the beaſt ſet up a worſhip in the will, and they do not know why any in the will alſo may not be ſubject and ſubmit to it. They can give them reaſons, they can give them arguments from ſcripture; and if they will not yield to theſe, they are to be looked upon as ſtubborn and refractory, and to be compelled by outward force. This hath been the courſe generally throughout the land of Babylon; but theſe ſhew hereby that they themſelves are erred from the truth (and therefore very unfit and unlikely to teach it others): for that which God works upon is the conſcience, which he convinceth by the light of his ſpirit; and no other light can truly convince it. That therefore which would have a man yield to any practice, or way of worſhip, till he be truly convinced, is of the devil. "My ſon, give me "thy heart," ſaith Chriſt, the wiſdom of God: come not to me with oblations and ſacrifices, but give me thy heart. My ſon, give me thy knee, give me thy obedience to the ways I have ſet up, give me thy conformity, ſaith antichriſt, ſaith the adulterated wiſdom: and if any refuſe, ſhe endeavours to compel them. Thus, like "Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat," ſhe makes (that which ſhe calls) Iſrael to ſin: or, like Nebuchadnezzar, ſhe ſets up an idol, and cauſeth all her children to bow to it. Thus the load of the iniquity of multitudes lies upon that ſcarlet whore, who forces

forces her cup of abominations and filthineſs upon all ſhe can, Rev. xvii. 4. cauſing all, *both ſmall and great*, in all her territories, to *receive her mark, and worſhip her image*. The work of the miniſter of Chriſt, is to keep the conſcience tender, that the voice of Chriſt may be heard, and the law of his ſpirit of life (which makes obedient to the God of life) ſpring up there: but this is the image, here is the way, bow, conform, ſay the miniſters of antichriſt. But we are not convinced in the ſight of God that this is the way, ſay poor ſouls. It is your own fault; ye may be convinced if ye will, ſay the miniſters of antichriſt; we are ready to give you arguments and ſcriptures to convince you; how is it ye are not convinced? Ye muſt be convinced, otherwiſe the magiſtrate muſt deal with you. Thus they endeavour to harden the conſcience, that they may ſit upon it and ride it, and terrify it from its ſubjection to its only true and lawful king. O the havock that hath been made of ſouls by this means! the Lord is requiring it of this generation.

But let me put this queſtion to all the learned and wiſe, in all the regions of Babylon, under what painted form or way of worſhip ſoever. Can any worſhip God aright, before they be truly convinced of his will and way? Can any be convinced without his light and ſpirit? Were it good and acceptable in the ſight of God, for any perſons to run into that way, whereof thou ſayeſt thou art convinced that it is the way, before they themſelves are convinced? If it be not good and acceptable, what is that which goes about to compel them? Away with thy carnal weapons; and if thou wilt draw to God, draw by that which is ſpiritual: but if thou wilt ſtill be uſing outward force (running to the laws of men, and power of the magiſtrate) the Lord hath opened an eye, which diſcovers thy nakedneſs herein, and is able to make it manifeſt in the ſight of all people; and thou ſhalt not long cover thy ſhame. The Lord's people ſhall "be a "willing people," to follow him "in the day of "his

" his power;" but all the Lord's people have been unwilling to follow thee in the day of thy power, which is near an end; and the very fountain of thy deceit (and tyranny over the conſcience) is opening and making manifeſt.

8. *Perſecution* of ſuch as ſhe cannot compel to her worſhip. She ſets up her form of knowledge, ſhe ſets up her way of worſhip, and thoſe that will not be drawn to own the one, and practiſe the other, ſhe ſets her brand upon them for erroneous perſons, ſchiſmaticks, hereticks; they muſt not " buy or ſell," Rev. xiii. 17. They muſt be baniſhed or impriſoned, or perhaps put to death; for ſhe is hardly ſatisfied, till ſhe hath drunk the blood of thoſe, who, in any eminent degree, are the witneſſes of Chriſt againſt her, Rev. xvii. 6. This was a thing wondered at by John, with great admiration; to ſee this woman, this great city, out of which all the venomous darts are ſhot againſt the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus, under a pretence of zeal for the church and ordinances of Chriſt. For this is the engine, whereby the dragon makes war with the true woman's ſeed, *(which keep the commandments of God, and have the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt)*, even by this falſe woman which rides on the beaſt, by whoſe power and ſtrength ſhe overcomes the ſaints. She ſets up a way of doctrine, a way of worſhip in a nation, and gets laws made for the defence of it, and againſt them that will not ſubmit to it; and here ſhe is too hard for the ſaints; by this means ſhe overcomes the martyrs and witneſſes, and keeps the truth down, and keeps up her way of deceit; which without this prop would ſoon fall.

This whoriſh ſpirit ſcents the ſpirit of the Lord; ſhe knows it will ſoon be her death, if ſhe cannot make it appear odious, and ſuppreſs it: therefore ſhe hunts this ſpirit, ſhe hunts the life and power of what ſhe herſelf profeſſes (eſpecially if it appear vigorous and ſtrong in any); ſhe ſeeks advantages againſt the ſervants of the living God, repreſenting them to the earthly powers as perſons of dangerous principles and bad

bad practices, inventing all manner of what can be called evil againſt them, and ſpreading it among the people, that the truth may ſtart up no-where in the earth, but every-where be knocked down by the violence of the multitude, or by the ſword of the offended magiſtrate. Now what is the matter of all this great noiſe and fury? Why this; *A lamb is riſen up in the innocency; the pure harmleſs ſpirit is appearing in the earth; the true life* (which diſcovers the hypocriſy, and dead forms and ways of the whoriſh ſpirit) *is breaking forth:* therefore ſhe makes a great outcry: Awake, people! awake! the church is in danger: ariſe, magiſtrates! magiſtracy and miniſtry will down, if this lamb-like ſpirit be ſuffered. Nay, nay: theſe ſhall ſtand, but Babylon ſhall fall, and her *myſtery of iniquity* be diſcovered, and her *deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs* made manifeſt; and the true life and ſpirit ſhall ariſe and take poſſeſſion of the hearts of people, and make them a clean and fit habitation for God: and people that are ſubject hereto, ſhall feel it, and enjoy it; though the merchants of Babylon ſay, men ſhall never be made clean while they live, but muſt ſtill have a body of ſin and death hanging about them. But how ſhall they put on Chriſt, who have not put off the body of ſin? Shall thoſe who are made kings and prieſts to God here on earth, miniſter in their filthy garments?

Theſe are ſome of the ſins of Babylon, that painted harlot, which is ſubtil in heart, and lies in wait to deceive, in the abſence of the true church, whoſe clothing and reſemblance ſhe takes up, and appears in.

And when ſhe had done all this; when, like Egypt, ſhe hath kept the ſeed in bondage in all her territories and dominions, in every church ſhe hath ſet up, and by all her miniſtries and ordinances; when, like Sodom, ſhe hath filled the whole world with filthineſs, uncleanneſs, and all manner of ſpiritual abominations; when, like old Jeruſalem the bond-woman, ſhe and her children have ſcoffed at the ſpirit in every appearance

pearance all the time of her reign, and have trampled upon and domineered over them, who have but ſpoken of the coming of the juſt-one in his people, ſporting herſelf in her own deceivings; yet, after all this, *ſhe wipes her mouth, and ſaith ſhe hath done no harm*; ſhe hath been for the goſpel, and church, and miniſtry, and ordinances, and the faith once delivered to the ſaints, and only againſt deceivers, ſeducers, blaſphemers, and hereticks. But the ſpirit of the Lord cannot be thus deceived; nor ſhall the nations be always thus deceived, and ſuffer her to ſit as a queen upon their conſciences; but ſhe ſhall ſee ſorrow, and they ſhall taſte joy at the ſound of the everlaſting goſpel, when once again it cometh to their ears, Rev. xiv. 6. and chap. xix. 6, 7.

The JUDGMENT of BABYLON.

BABYLON the Great, this great city of abominations, which hath reigned over the whole earth, which hath bewitched all ſorts of profeſſors with the golden cup of her fornications, which hath ſubtilly led from the life, and held all ſorts captive in the witchery of her deceit, and hath triumphed over the holy ſeed, making Sion their mother deſolate, who ſat in the duſt, and was trampled upon by her: this great city, this glorious city, this rich city, this mighty powerful city, this queen of the earth (which knows not what belongs to Sion's miſery, ſorrow, poverty, and deſolation), with antichriſt her king and huſband (who hath clothed himſelf with the garments of light, and appeared in the likeneſs of the king of Sion, and hath long been ſo acknowledged and worſhipped), is to be judged by the ſpirit of life, which ariſeth up out of the duſt of Sion.

And though Babylon the great whore (who in all her transformings hath ſtill remained an enemy to the life) hath great power and great wiſdom, and can ſhift

ſhift very ſubtilly to ſave herſelf by both; yet *ſtrong is the Lord God who judgeth her, and he alſo is wiſe*; and ſhe ſhall not eſcape his hand, but he will purſue her with his voices, with his thunderings, with his hail-ſtones, with his earthquakes, with his woes, with his plagues, with his cups of indignation, till he hath made her manifeſt, till he hath broken her in pieces, till he hath crumbled and laid her in the duſt, till he hath brought her down to the very pit, where the feet of Sion ſhall trample upon her for ever. Sing, ſing, O inhabitant of Sion! doſt thou not behold the crown of pride going down apace? The decree is ſealed againſt her; ſhe cannot eſcape; yea, ſhe is fallen, ſhe is fallen; ſhe is already taken in the ſnare; the eye of my life ſeeth it, and rejoiceth over her in the living power.

The plagues of God Almighty, from the fierceneſs of his indignation, are viſiting her whole territories, and paſſing over all her land. Nothing can help her to avoid his ſtroke; no paint will ſerve, no cover will hide, no profeſſion, no practice, no duties, no ordinances, no church, no miniſtry, can avail to conceal her; but that ſpirit is purſued by the ſpirit of the Lord, and found out every-where, and plagues are prepared and pouring out upon her. Nay, though ſhe leave all her forms, and pretend to wait and ſeek for the Lord; yet ſhe is found out there alſo.

Now what is her judgment? Deſtruction and utter deſolation from the hand of the Lord; to be an hiſſing and reproach throughout all generations; to be brought down (by pourings forth of the wrath and vengeance of the Almighty) into the pit, and there to drink the fulneſs of his wrath for ever. Sion ſhall be exalted; Sion ſhall drink the cup of life, the cup of bleſſing, the cup of love, the cup of ſalvation for ever: but Babylon the cup of fury, the cup of indignation for ever and ever. Sion ſhall ſing; but Babylon ſhall howl: and all that ſaw any beauty, or took any pleaſure in her, ſhall mourn over her. Alas, alas, for her! ſhe who hath ſo many ages gone for

the church, is now proved to be the whore; thoſe who have been taken, in their ſeveral transformings, for the true miniſters, made manifeſt to be the falſe prophets; their ordinances and duties, but thefts and imitations; things which they have ſtolen from what they read in the ſcriptures, but never received from the hand of the ſpirit.

The wrath of God, the dreadful cup of his fury, and jealous indignation for the cauſe of Sion, is to go over her whole land, over her ſea, and all the ſhips that trade therein, and all her merchants, with all her precious traffick and merchandize. All her doctrines which ſhe hath ſtolen out of the ſcripture, all her diſciplines, all her experiences, all her performances (even thoſe which are moſt like the performances of the former ſaints); nay, though ſhe may ſpeak the very words of truth, yet as they come from her mouth, they ſhall be thrown by and judged, and be of no ſervice or eſteem in Sion. The precioufeſt of her ware ſhall be droſs and dung in the land of life, where there ſhall be no ſea, nor no ſuch kind of merchants, traffick, or trading for ever.

Her earth alſo ſhall be made deſolate, and burnt up, with all that is found therein; all her ſettlements ſhall be ſhaken; all her fruit-trees ſhall be rooted up; all her fruit ſhall wither, rot, die, and periſh. All her converſions of people to God (as ſhe calls them) ſhall come to nothing: yea, and if ſhe have yet any more dreſſes, or ſecret coverings, wherein ſhe would appear like the church again, and bring forth again; yet ſhe and her children ſhall immediately be diſcovered, her fleſh burnt with fire, and her children daſhed againſt the ſtones. Every ſtreet in her city, every houſe and idol in every ſtreet, every room in every houſe, with every inhabitant, ſhall drink of the cup of aſtoniſhment, and ſtumble and fall, and riſe no more. "Thou haſt long triumphed over me, O "mine enemy! becauſe I have fallen, and have long "ſat in darkneſs; but rejoice no longer; for I ſhall "riſe again, and the Lord ſhall be a light unto me; "but

" but thou ſhalt riſe no more, and thy light ſhall be " put out for ever. Glory to the meek ſuffering " Lamb, even to him that ſits upon the throne of " life for ever."

Her air alſo ſhall be darkened. The Lord ſhall enlighten my darkneſs; but the light of Babylon ſhall be darkneſs for evermore. " The light of a candle " ſhall be ſeen no more at all in thee." Many lights hath Babylon ſet up in the dark night; but the riſing of the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhall extinguiſh them all for ever, and Babylon ſhall be ſhut up in utter darkneſs. Yea, all that have retained to Babylon, all that have walked by the light of any of her candles, that have cried up any of her falſe ware for orthodox, that have given up their names to her under any of her dreſſes or appearances, or that have received any of her marks, they ſhall partake of her ſhame, of her miſery, and of her torment, from the hand of the Lord God. Yea, her throne alſo ſhall be viſited, and the ſeat of antichriſt in every heart ſhall feel the wrath.

Riſe up from the duſt, and ſhout forth with joy, O captive daughter of Sion, who haſt long dwelt under oppreſſion, in the midſt of the daughter of Babylon. Behold! Babylon's king ſhall be no longer judge over Sion; but thy king ſhall be judge, and he ſhall judge the king of Babylon: and let all the powers and potſherds of the earth ſtrive to their utmoſt; yet, ſaith the Lord, " have I ſet my king upon my holy hill of " Sion," and he ſhall rule in my people, and rule over Babylon.

Learn, therefore, O inhabitants of the earth, great and ſmall, meekneſs; learn righteouſneſs; learn the fear of the Lord; kiſs the Son; harden not yourſelves againſt him, calling him a deceiver, a blaſphemer, a ſeducer, an heretick (for what ye do to the leaſt that appear in his life, ye do to him); but hearken to the word of his everlaſting goſpel, which ſaith, " FEAR " GOD, AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM, FOR THE HOUR " OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME; and ye cannot eſcape

his hand by that fear which is taught by the precepts of men, or by traditional knowledge out of the ſcriptures; nor while ye ſeek that honour which came out of the earth, and is of the earth, and to that which is earthly. Therefore let your hearts learn to know him, and your tongues to confeſs him, and your knees to bow to him; which if ye do, ye muſt forget all that knowledge, and thoſe confeſſions and bowings which ye have learned in Babylon; for though ye may have confeſſed ſome true things, yet (having learned this in Babylon) ye have confeſſed falſely; even as the Jews, who ſaid, "the Lord liveth," yet ſwore falſely, Jer. v. 2.

Now conſider, ye miniſters of ſeveral ſorts, and ye ſeveral ſorts of profeſſors: we may appear great enemies to you, becauſe we witneſs againſt your ways, and tell you what the end of them will be; but are we enemies to you indeed, whoſe deſire it is to ſave you from this great wrath, which hath already entered into the earth, and ſeized on ſome? Should we ſooth you up, and not witneſs theſe things to you (which we infallibly know) how ſhould we anſwer it to the Lord our God, or to your ſouls, when we ſhall appear before him? If we were in your condition, would we be content to be let go on, and to be overtaken with this great deſtruction? We cannot be ſilent. Ye muſt be ſilent; but we cannot. We know ye muſt be ſilent; for that which now ſpeaks in you, hath been ſilenced in us, and is not to miniſter the things of God. But the ſpirit of the Lord muſt not be quenched in us, notwithſtanding all our weakneſs; but the treaſure muſt iſſue forth from the earthen veſſel, for the relief of the poor in ſpirit, who alone receive the goſpel. Therefore, though ye hate us, though ye perſecute us, though ye ſpeak all manner of evil againſt us, and uſe us ever ſo hardly; yet there is love rooted in our ſouls toward your ſouls, yea, and toward your perſons alſo: and having both felt the wrath, and taſted of the mercy, we cannot but warn you of the one, and invite you to the other.

And

And oh! that ye might find a ſhelter under the ſhadow of his wings in the ſtormy ſeaſon, when wrath ſhall be ſhowered down without mercy!

And this we cannot but tell you, that the ſeveral ways of religion in the Chriſtian world are but ſo many ſeveral coverings; and that that which is covered with them is the whoriſh ſpirit, which the ſpirit of the Lord is hunting; who will ſtrip her, and make her naked, and ſhe ſhall appear to have been the whore under them all. Now that which lieth beneath this ſpirit in you, which is deſpiſed and trampled upon as a thing of nought, which is burdened and daily ſlain by your multitudes of ordinances, profeſſions, and religious practices; this is the heir of life; and by the raiſing up and living of this in you, may ye come to life, and no otherwiſe. And all religion without this (even the moſt inward) is but the deceit of the whore, who makes a great ſhew of worſhip, and zeal toward Chriſt, his ordinances and miniſtry (as ſhe calls them); but by all theſe, and under all theſe, holds the life in bondage, and ſtrives by all means to ſlay the heir, that the inheritance might come to her ſon. But Cain the ſacrificer; Iſhmael, the ſon of the bond-woman; Eſau, the hunter abroad after veniſon; the Jew, full of profeſſion, zeal, ordinances, and worſhip, ſhall not inherit: but ſlain Abel ſhall be raiſed to life: Iſaac (who was born of the dry and barren womb) ſhall have the promiſe; plain Jacob the bleſſing; the out-caſt Gentile be ſought out. Thus it ſhall be; can ye read it? Yet it is the deſire of our ſouls that a remnant of you may be ſaved, and now is the gathering. Therefore ſeek humility, ſeek poverty of ſpirit, ſeek the ſuffering ſeed, the meek, innocent, harmleſs, dove-like nature, even the love which doth no ill, nor thinks no ill; for this is the ſpirit which is to be gathered: but the high and lofty, the wiſe and knowing, the fat and ſtrong, the rough and confident in their wiſdom, and in their duties, churches, ordinances, &c. (which they have gathered and ſtolen from the ſcriptures out of the life) are with all theſe to be rejected, and to be ſhut

up in blindneſs and hardneſs of heart. "Seeing, "they are to ſee, and not perceive; and hearing, to "hear, and not underſtand; leſt they ſhould be con- "verted, and healed." Yea, it is this ſpirit which is to fret under its pain and torment from the woes and plagues; but cannot repent, but paſſeth on with Babylon to ruin and deſtruction, Rev. xvi. 9, 10, 11.

"Babylon is become the habitation of devils, and "the hold of every foul ſpirit, and a cage of every "unclean and hateful bird. Come out of her, my "people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and "that ye receive not of her plagues," Rev. xviii. 2. 4.

This is the cry concerning Babylon juſt upon her fall. Her iniquity is full, her filth overflows, the pure ſeed is gathering out of her, and nothing but devils and foul ſpirits, and unclean hateful birds, remain in her. And the call ſtill is to the people of God, from one remove to another, from one part of Babylon to another, to travel on, and paſs away ſtill, till they come quite out of it all. To come out of one part of Babyloniſh worſhip, that is not enough; or to come out of ſome pieces of Babyloniſh knowledge and wiſdom, will not anſwer the call; but ye muſt come out of it all. "Depart ye, depart ye; "this is not your reſt, for it is polluted." Stay not in any part of the unclean land, O child of the pure life! but be ſeparate, and touch not the unclean thing, if thou wilt have the holy-one to receive thee. Not only the ſeveral dreſſes and forms of the whore are polluted; but her ſpirit alſo, and all her inward fabrick of religion, out of which thou muſt alſo come, if ever thou be joined to the pure life. Thy faith, thy hope, thy love, thy patience, thy joy, thy peace, thy juſtification, thy ſanctification, thy mortification, thy ability to pray, to give thanks, to wait, &c. all muſt down, all muſt ſuffer loſs, all muſt become droſs and dung to thee, that thou mayſt know the building of true life from and in the ſpirit. For the Lord will not own any of theſe, nor receive thee with any

of

of these which the whore hath touched; but if thou wilt have the pure life, both within and without, thou must part with the corrupt life, both within and without. This is a faithful and true testimony; but who can receive it? Will not both the houses of Israel be offended, and stumble at it? But if any of the people of God will abide still in Babylon, and not hearken to every call of the spirit of the Lord, to follow its guidance out of every part of her, *they shall receive* (from the impartial hand of the Lord) *of her plagues, and have torment and sorrow* proportionable to the glory and pleasure they have had with her. Therefore, if after one, two, three, or many removes out of some parts and practices of Babylon, the voice still follow, crying, "Come out of her, my people" (the spirit of antichrist is yet among you, the wine of fornication from the pure life is not yet purged out of you), do not stop your ears, thinking this belongs not to you, because ye have forsaken some paths which are antichristian; but hear and follow; for it is your life, and your way to rest and peace in the land of the living, and your sure preservation from anguish, perplexity, and misery in the hour of Babylon's judgment and sore distress.

An OBJECTION answered.

NOW there is one thing which lies as a great block in the way, to hinder this testimony from entering into the hearts of those to whom it is directed, or at least to weaken the spirit's demonstration of it to their consciences (for exceeding subtil is the whorish spirit to keep every one of her subjects from the sight or suspicion of her in themselves, and to darken every beam of light, whereby it pleaseth God to make any way for the discovery of her in them), which is this:

Object. But hath all our religion, for these many ages, been Babylonish, and whoredom from the life?

All our churches, all our ordinances, all our duties, all our miniſtry, &c. We can never be drawn to believe this. We are ſure we have felt lively touches from God many a time, and enjoyed ſweet communion with him in them. God hath often met us there, and refreſhed our ſpirits; which he would not have done, had they not been of himſelf.

Anſw. There hath been a ſimplicity and ſincerity of heart, ſtirring in ſome people towards God, in all ages; even among the heathen, under all their idols; and among the Jews, in the midſt of their great apoſtaſy: which ſimplicity is of God, and acceptable with him, notwithſtanding all the load of filth that may hang round about it. Even in the midſt of Egypt, or in the midſt of Babylon, if Iſrael groans, the Lord hears, and may return ſweet anſwers to Iſrael, even there. "When Iſrael was a child, I loved him, and "called my ſon out of Egypt." The loweſt breathing of true life towards God is the voice of his Son, and enters into his ears from the darkeſt part of Egypt or Babylon.

Now in this nation the ſimplicity hath more ſtirred than in other nations; the ſeed of God in this land hath been exceeding precious and dear to him. And at the beginning of theſe late troubles, the ſtirring of the ſimplicity from the pure ſeed was more vigorous and lively than it had been in many ages before; and accordingly the anſwers of God to it were more freſh and ſweet; and there was a taſte of him, and fellowſhip with him, and ſweet hopes and refreſhments to the ſoul. Though the way of praying, preaching, and worſhip, either publick or private, was not right before him; yet he overlooked that which his ſoul hated (winking at the time of ignorance and antichriſtian darkneſs), and met with that which he loved. And if the ſimplicity had grown and thriven, communion with God, and life from him, would have increaſed, although the pure path of the ſanctuary had not yet been made manifeſt.

But

But this was it deſtroyed all; another thing got up under a cover, and the ſimplicity ſunk; and ſo the life withdrew, and God hath grown ſtrange to his people. He miſſed that which he loved, and came to viſit; he found that thruſt upon him for his, which his ſoul cannot own or unite with; and ſo he became but "as a wayfaring man, that turneth aſide to tarry "for a night," Jer. xiv. 8. Enter into your hearts, O ye backſliding children! is it not thus? You who had ſweet taſtes of God, is he not become a ſtranger to you? You that had ſweet, freſh, lively breathings after God, are you not ſet down in a form (or under ſome pleaſing notions), and have got a covering, but loſt the ſimplicity of your life, and the ſweet taſtes of God, and refreſhments from him? Thus it hath been in all reformations. There was commonly a pure, ſingle, naked beginning; but an evil thing ſoon got dominion over it, ſlaying the pure living ſtirring by the form which it raiſed up, under a pretence of preſerving the life thereby, and of ſerving God more uniformly and acceptably therein. Ah! the precious ſeed that was ſown at the beginning of theſe troubles! What is become of it? How is every one turned aſide from the pure life, into ſome idol or other of his own heart! ſome into one way of worſhip, and ſome into another; ſome into one notion, and ſome into another; and all joining together to keep the ſeed in bondage, endeavouring either to bring it back again to Egypt (to make it ſerve there), or to deſtroy and bury it in the wilderneſs. But the Lord hath viſited this poor deſolate ſeed, and hath been gathering it from all quarters; from amidſt all empty forms on the one hand, and all vain high notions on the other hand; and he will preſerve it, overturning all his new enemies, as well as his old.

This then is the ſum of the anſwer.

1. No way, or particular act of worſhip, under the New Teſtament, is acceptable to God, without his ſpirit.

2. All

2. All invented or imitated ways or acts of worſhip, to the performing whereof the moving, preſence, and power of his ſpirit is not neceſſary (but men can perform them without it), are Babyloniſh, and whoredom from that ſpirit to which the true Chriſtian is joined, and in which all that he doth is performed.

3. Under this antichriſtianiſm, under this whoredom (even in the land of Babylon, where the true Iſrael is captive), a true ſimplicity towards God may ſometimes be ſtirring.

4. When this at any time is ſtirring towards the Lord, the Lord pities it, the Lord loves it, the Lord accepts it. When this calls, the Lord hears, and waits that he may be gracious, and return anſwers of grace to it.

5. Though the Lord accept of this in the midſt of Babylon, and in the midſt of the whoriſh ways of worſhip that have been learned there; yet this doth not make Babylon, or her ways of worſhip, acceptable; nor are they to be made uſe of (nor cannot) by any that fears God, to juſtify them.

6. Where they are ſo made uſe of, and the Babyloniſh ways and forms of worſhip cried up (becauſe of God's viſitations and tender mercy to his ſeed under them), God is provoked, his preſence withdrawn, life loſt, and wrath prepared againſt thoſe forms and ways of worſhip, which will reach to the very bowels of thoſe who are found there.

And let this word come home to your hearts, O ye that ever knew what belonged to ſweet communion with God! if God was ſo tender to you in Babylon, when he ſtirred up in you a pure ſimplicity and zeal there, what would he have been to you, if ye had come out of Babylon? Ah! ye have loſt the ſubſtance for a ſhadow; and that not a right ſhadow neither, but a ſhadow of your own forming! and now ye are angry with them, who will not alſo leave the ſubſtance to cry up your ſhadow. Ah! enter into your ſecret chambers, and let ſhame cover your faces; ye who would propagate that apoſtaſy from the Lord, which your

your own hearts have too far entered into, and are ſo deeply involved in. O that the eye were opened in you which can ſee it! Do not your hearts a little feel it? O mourn after the Lord, and mourn after the loſs of that which once (in ſome meaſure in you) was true to the Lord. O that the loſt ſheep might be ſought out, and that which hath been ſcattered (in the day of your loftineſs, and ſeeking dominion and great things) might be gathered again to the Lord! for great is the wrath and ſeverity that is towards you, and he is become exceeding jealous for his ſeed's ſake; and judgment muſt begin with you, who cry out againſt antichriſt in one groſs fleſhly appearance, and yet are ſerving him yourſelves, ſome of you in other forms, ſome in ſpirit.

This is a ſtanding truth; whatever is not of the ſpirit of God in religion and worſhip, is of the ſpirit of antichriſt. Whatever the ſpirit of man hath invented or imitated, is not the thing itſelf, is not the true worſhip; for the true worſhip is only and continually in the ſpirit, and never out of the ſpirit. The true praying is in the ſpirit; the true ſinging in the ſpirit; the true preaching in the ſpirit: whatſoever is out of it, is of antichriſt in man. Now therefore give up all your religion, your knowledge, your worſhip, your practices, which are out of the ſpirit; and return unto the Lord, and wait for his raiſing of that ſeed in you, which once began to ſpring, but is now ſlain, and lies in death and captivity under all theſe; and the earthly part (wherein all this religion and theſe practices ſtand) covers its blood, ſo as ye cannot ſee how ye have ſlain, and daily do ſlay, the juſt one.

Oh the blood, the blood, the innocent blood, that daily cries to the Lord againſt you! How can the Lord accept any of your ſervices, while your hands are full of blood! while the pure ſimplicity is ſlain, the love grown cold, the life loſt, and the whoriſh way and path (wherein and whereby it was loſt) cried up for the way of God. Shall not the Lord viſit for

for these things? Shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Yea, his wrath is kindled, the fierceness of his wrath is kindled against the professors of this age, and wo is from the Lord towards them. Wo to the Protestant congregations, wo to the select churches, wo to their pastors, who have helped them to wander from the life to dead idols, which cannot profit: wo to them who are exalted in notions and high knowledge. Ye have judged and condemned the Papists, and the Lord hath found the same spirit of idolatry in you! but turn from your idols, return to your simplicity, put away your adulteries from between your breasts, and return to your first love, and the Lord will receive you, though ye have wandered after many lovers, and have been inflamed with the love of idols under every green tree: but in these your church-ways and worships the soul of the Lord abhors you, and all your former zeal and simplicity is blotted out and forgotten; and in your present adultery and idolatry shall ye die, unless ye hear the voice of the Lord recalling you, and turn at his reproof.

Now in tender bowels to help you a little, consider that which follows:

The same spirit that stealeth away the true simplicity, raiseth up and stealeth in a false image thereof; which there is no perceiving at present, unless the soul lie very low, and be kept open and clear in the pure light.

And as in the true simplicity, the true light, the true knowledge, the true faith, the true hope, the true love, the true meekness, the true zeal, the true poverty and humility, &c. springs up and is nourished; so in the false image of simplicity (which the devil secretly conveys in, when he steals away the true) there is a likeness of all these springing up and growing.

And here is the beginning of Babylon in the heart; here are the inward riches and treasures thereof. What can Sion pretend to, which Babylon hath not in the resemblance?

reſemblance? Is there ſimplicity of heart in Sion? And is there not ſimplicity of heart among the inhabitants of Babylon? Yea, a falſe image. Is there light in Sion? And is there not alſo light in Babylon? Yea, there is the light of the ſun, and the light of the moon, and the light of the ſtars which fell from heaven, and the light of many candles ſhining in Babylon. Is there a true knowledge in Sion? There is knowledge, falſely ſo called, in Babylon. A falſe knowledge of the croſs of Chriſt; a falſe knowledge of his death; a falſe knowledge of his blood, without feeling the living virtue thereof, which truly waſheth away the ſin. So for faith, hope, love, meekneſs, zeal, humility, &c. there are falſe images of all theſe in Babylon, and of whatever elſe is wrought in truth in the inhabitants of Sion.

Now when the truth is loſt, and the falſe image crept in (both which are done at unawares, while the huſbandman is aſleep, and ſo he perceives it not, but thinks in his very heart that it is ſtill the ſeed of truth that is growing up in him), then begins the myſtery of fornication, idolatry, witchcraft, and all manner of ſpiritual wickedneſs and deceit to work in the heart. Thy believing, thy hoping, thy love, thy zeal, thy praying, thy waiting, &c. all here is abomination; it is from a falſe root; it is of a falſe kind; it is not of the true ſeed: the enemy hath ſtolen away that, whilſt thou waſt negligent and ſlumbering; and all this ariſeth in thee from the ſeed which he did ſow inſtead thereof, and is the fruit of the land of Babylon.

And having thus committed inward whoredom in thine own heart, then thou ſeekeſt and ſetteſt up outward ways of whoredom alſo. Having firſt ſet up an inward image of the inward life of the ſaints, thou then ſeekeſt and ſetteſt up another image of their outward worſhip; an image of a church, an image of a miniſtry, an image of ordinances, an image of praying, an image of ſinging, an image of preaching, an image of baptiſm, an image of the ſaints communion. And thus thou art defiled within and without: and art

mad

mad with envy and rage that thou canſt not bewitch the inhabitants of Sion (who are kept pure from all theſe defilements, and reſerved as witneſſes againſt thee) into thy bed of whoredoms. And thus, while thou thinkeſt thou art the chief worſhipper, thou art all over polluted; "the whole head is ſick, and the whole "heart faint;" there is no cleanneſs, no ſoundneſs, within or without, but "wounds and bruiſes, and putri-"fying ſores," which "have not been cloſed, neither "bound up, nor mollified with oil:" but the hurt of the daughter of my people hath been healed deceitfully, by phyſicians of no value, who have not the oil. Iſa. i. 5, 6. and Ezek. xiii. 10.

This is generally the ſtate of profeſſors of this day; but they cannot ſee it: for they have put out the eye of the ſimplicity (wherewith alone God will ſuffer the things of life to be ſeen), and God hath blinded the eye of their wiſdom, that they ſhall not ſee, nor be converted and healed that way. So that exceeding miſerable is their eſtate: they will not ſee God's way, and God will not let them ſee their way. So that though there be "line upon line, precept upon pre-"cept, here a little, and there a little; yet it is that "they might ſtumble, and fall, and be ſnared, and "broken, and taken." For as diſcoveries of truth grow more clear and manifeſt; ſo they grow more hardened againſt it. And as they, on the one hand, increaſe in walking contrary to God; ſo God, on the other hand, proceeds in walking contrary to them; delighting more and more to ſtumble the wiſe diſputing part, which would ſo fain know, but muſt be made blind, that the eye of the babe may be opened, which ſees that in the childiſh ſimplicity, which the other eye can never reach in the moſt manly wiſdom.

Therefore put away all your images and likeneſſes of truth: put away your falſe faith (which can never overcome the worldly nature and ſpirit in you), and your falſe hope (which can never purify your hearts), and your feigned humility, and ſelf-willed faſts (which can never bring down the lofty exalted nature in you), and

and your falſe love (wherewith ye can never love the brethren in the truth, but only the brethren in your own notions, or ſome ſuch other likeneſs of the truth), and your falſe zeal, meekneſs, holineſs, &c. (all which ſpring and grow up from the wrong ſeed, in a ſeeming ſimplicity): and all your praying, reading, preaching, &c. which ye have taken up and do practice in your own wills, which ſhould be crucified; and wherewith no ſervice, worſhip, or performance, can be pleaſing to God; and wait for the raiſing of the true ſeed of life, in the true ſimplicity, whereby ye may ſerve God acceptably here, and be ſaved hereafter. And be not mockers, leſt your bands be made ſtrong; for the conſumption is determined againſt you by that Spirit of life, whoſe breath will waſte you. *All fleſh is graſs, and the glory thereof as the flower of the field! Surely this people is graſs, and their zeal and profeſſion of God, like the fading flower.*

SOME

SOME

Plain QUERIES,

Drawn out of the Book of the REVELATIONS, for all Sorts of Profeſſors of this Age to anſwer between GOD and their own Souls; that they may ſee whether they have received that Light from him, which his Spirit judged neceſſary to give forth, to keep People chaſte to him, and to preſerve them from the ſeveral painted Beds of Antichriſt's Fornications and Whoredoms from the Life.

" Bleſſed is he that readeth, and they that hear the " words of this prophecy, and keep thoſe " things which are written therein: for the " time is at hand," Rev. i. 3.

The time of deceit was then at hand for antichriſt (with his falſe church, and falſe prophets) to get up, which were to laſt till " the hour of judgment," Rev. xiv. 7, 8. Haſt thou read? haſt thou heard? haſt thou kept the things written in this book? then happy art thou? But haſt thou not read in the Spirit? haſt thou not heard the true ſound of theſe things from the Spirit of life? haſt thou not kept the things written therein? Then thou haſt been deceived with the myſtery of iniquity, and muſt ſmart with the whore in the hour of her judgment.

The QUERIES are theſe which follow.

I. WHAT woman was that which was clothed with the ſun, and had the moon under her feet, &c. Rev. xii. 1. Whether it was the true church or no?

II. What

II. What that wilderneſs was whereinto ſhe fled; where ſhe had a place prepared of God, that they ſhould feed her there 1260 days? ver. 6.

III. How long thoſe 1260 days did laſt? and whether they be yet expired? and whether the true church is any-where elſe to be found all the time of the 1260 days, but in that place in the wilderneſs?

IV. What are all the churches, the miniſtry, the ordinances, that appear out of the wilderneſs all this while, while the true church is there?

V. What was that beaſt which came out of the ſea; to which the dragon gave his power, his ſeat, and great authority? which all the world worſhipped? Rev. xiii. ver. 1. to 5.

VI. What is that ſea, and thoſe ſhips, wherein and wherewith the merchants of the earth traded with Babylon, and were made rich by their traffick? what were thoſe merchants? what their merchandize? and what kind of riches was this? Rev. xviii. ver. 15 to 20.

VII. What was that name of God, and that tabernacle, and thoſe inhabitants of heaven, which were blaſphemed by the beaſts that aroſe out of the ſea, all the time of the forty-two months? Rev. xiii. ver. 5, 6.

VIII. What is the Lamb's book of life? and where is it? and how are the names of any ſo written in it, as to preſerve them from the worſhip of the beaſt? Rev. xiii. 8.

IX. What is that beaſt that came up out of the earth, with the horns of a lamb (as if it came up in the Lamb's power) which doth great wonders, and juſtifieth his ſacrifice, by making fire come down from heaven in the ſight of men; who both cauſed men to make an image to the firſt beaſt, and alſo putteth life into the image which men make? Rev. xiii. ver. 11, &c. So that here is not a mere dead image, but there is life in the beaſt's knowledge, ordinances, and worſhip: yet with God all this is dead, for it is not the true life.

X. What is the beaſt's mark, his name, his number? (Rev. xiii. 17.) For if I do not infallibly know this, I may have received his mark; I may help to make up his name; I may be of his number, and be (unknown to myſelf) a worſhipper of him and his image, and ſo be liable to partake of the torment of the fire and brimſtone threatened to ſuch; Rev. xix. 9, 10.

XI. What is that ſong, which none could learn but the 144:00 which were not defiled with women, but remained virgins? Rev. xiv. 3.

XII. What was that other woman, which took and kept the place of the former woman, after ſhe had fled into the wilderneſs, and enlarged her territories in nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples? Rev. xvii. 4. and ver. 15.

XIII. What were the purple and ſcarlet colours, and the gold and precious ſtones ſhe was decked with? ver. 4.

XIV. What was the golden cup ſhe had in her hand, which was full of abominations, and filthineſs of her fornications; in the midſt of all her glorious appearance of zeal, devotion, humility, and holineſs? ver. 4.

XV. What kind of drunkenneſs was it, wherewith the kings and inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of this cup? Rev. xvii. 2.

XVI. How may thoſe who have hated the whore, and made her deſolate and naked, and eat her fleſh, and burned her with fire, yet after all this, give their kingdom again to the beaſt? Rev. xvii. ver. 16, 17. How may this be done? and how often may it be done?

Theſe are plain ſimple queries, not to entangle mens minds, or ſet their brains on work (for that way ſhall they never be able to reſolve them) but to awaken the ſimplicity in them, which will readily let them ſee what the Lord hath revealed to them herein, and in which they are to wait for the knowledge hereof, that they

they may escape or come out of the snare. And in the mean time not to boast, as Israel of old did (when the prophets from the mouth of the Lord accused them) that they had not "polluted themselves," they had not "gone after Baalim" (Jer. xxii. xxiii. and ver. 35.): but wait, O back-sliding Christian! and thou shalt "see the way in the valley." And though thou hast often traversed thy ground to change thy path, gadding from one form to another, from one notion to another; yet all this hath been out of the life, out of the pure power, and still in the whoredom. Open the weak sick eye in the weak heart (*for how weak is thy heart, while thou hast done all this!*), and let the languishing simplicity be my witness: for (under all thy wisdom, thy zeal, thy knowledge, thy worship) that faints, that fails, that is not what it was in the beginning. Though thou art grown much higher, wiser, and greater otherwise, yet there thou hast lost: and happy wilt thou be, if all thy gains ever since may become loss to thee for the recovering of this.

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS,

Helping out of the Suburbs or Out-skirts of Babylon, that her inward Building may be the better come at, and lie more open to the Axe and Hammer, which are to batter it down, and to cut it for the Fire.

FIRST, consider what it was the church fled out of, when she fled into the wilderness. Was it not out of that church-state or building, which the Spirit of God had raised up for her here in the world, to

which her ordinances, and way of church-worſhip belonged? Was it not here that the dragon aſſaulted her, and from whence ſhe fled into a deſolate place and ſtate?

Secondly, What ſpirit entered into theſe, when ſhe fled out of them? Were not theſe the conqueror's ſpoils? Did not antichriſt get poſſeſſion of the form? Did not the whore get the ſpouſe's attire? Did not the wolves gather up the ſheeps clothing, and clothe themſelves therewith? Was not the outward court (what is the outward court under the goſpel, but the viſible church-ſtate, with the viſible ordinances thereof?) given to the Gentiles, who trod under foot the holy city, all the while they were worſhipping in the outward court? Rev. xi. 2.

Thirdly, What ſpirit is it directs men to theſe, ſince the true church hath been fled out of them? And to what intent? Is it not that ſpirit which would keep men from the life, that they might not be born of the barren womb in the wilderneſs, but be born of ſome of the fruitful wombs of the viſible churches; while the true church is inviſible, and hath no viſible place in the earth, but remains in that place in the wilderneſs which God prepared for her, and where ſhe receiveth her food all the forty-two months? Rev. xii. ver. 6, 14.

I have ſmarted deeply for theſe things, and have been taught by the briars and thorns of the wilderneſs, whereby my ears came to be opened, to hear the ſound of the everlaſting goſpel, to which they were before through ignorance ſtopped. For I alſo did believe and expect great things in a church-ſtate and way of worſhip; and in ſimplicity of heart did I enter into it, and walk in it, and was not without knowledge, warmth, and experiences there. But all this the Lord broke down by a ſtrong hand, in one moment; and hath taught me ſince to throw away all my gains here, and elſewhere, and to count them but droſs and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord. And having taſted, having ſeen, having felt,

felt, having handled, I cannot but commend the life; and diſſuade all men from all knowledge, all worſhip, all religion, all ways and practices (though ever ſo taking, pleaſant, and promiſing) out of the life. And this is to know Chriſt; namely, to know the life: and this is to obey Chriſt, to obey the life: and this is the kingdom of Chriſt which is to come, to have the life reign in power and great glory. But the knowing or believing of an hiſtory concerning Chriſt, this is not the knowledge or the faith: antichriſt all along the apoſtaſy, in all his various forms and dreſſes, hath known and believed thus: and this kind of knowledge muſt paſs away further than it can find a place and ſervice in the life. Be not angry at my teſtimony; it flows from pure love, and comes forth in great good-will to your ſouls.

Yea, if it be poſſible that I might be a little ſerviceable to you (for my ſoul travails for the redemption of profeſſors from the witchery of the whoriſh ſpirit, even of ſuch as are ready to revile that which alone can redeem them), in the meekneſs and coolneſs of your ſpirits, out of the fiery falſe zeal, conſider yet a little further theſe few things following:

1. The ſtate of the goſpel is an inviſible ſtate, a ſtate conſiſting of inviſible things (as the law was a viſible ſtate, or a ſtate conſiſting of viſible things); the light inviſible, the life inviſible, the power inviſible; that which converts inviſible, that which is converted inviſible, that which it is converted to inviſible, and the whole courſe of ſpiritual life lies inviſible.

2. This inviſible ſtate hath a viſible way of appearance to the world, by garments which it wears, by motions and exerciſes which the life chooſeth for it to appear in.

3. Theſe garments are ſubject to corrupt, and to be worn by that which is corruptible, and corrupted. That which hath not the life, may put on the garment; and that which hath loſt the life, may ſtill keep the garment.

4. The preſervation of the life lies not in the garment, or in the obſervation of any thing wherein the

life did once appear; but the preſervation of the garment lies in the life. And the life may change its garment at its pleaſure, and may refuſe to wear thoſe any more which the whore hath worn, but as the life again leadeth.

5. When the life is at any time loſt, the only way of recovery is by retiring to the inviſible, and keeping there, and growing up there; and not coming forth in the viſible further than the life leads, nor ſtaying there any longer than the life ſtays.

Now this is the miſtake of perſons generally; they look for the finding the inviſible life in viſibles. They run to corrupted ordinances and ways of devotion, and think to find God there: but do not wait to feel him in their hearts, and to be led by him into what he pleaſeth; and to ſtay no where any longer than while he ſtayeth there, but to follow the Lamb whereſoever he goeth.

Some others miſtake in running to that, and waiting there where they once felt life, but do not know the way to wait on the life itſelf: and ſo they are running to an image, waiting at an image, worſhipping of an image, and the living God will not meet them there. But throw away your images; let Ephraim, the dear child, ſay to his idols, Get you hence; thruſt away your adulteries which provoke the eye of God's jealouſy, receive the fore-runner (the ſevere purifier) into your boſoms, and let the fire of his jealouſy cleanſe your hearts, and the pure will ſoon come after, and lodge again between your breaſts.—Can ye hear this ſound; That which is born of the ſame wiſdom, cannot but hear it; but the other birth muſt have its ear ſtopped?

Now hearken to this advice. When the inviſible life is felt and known, do not diſdain to follow it into whatever viſible thing it leads. Let not thy wiſdom be judge what the life will lead into, or what the life is to be followed in; but let the life itſelf be judge: and let the child, which is born of the life, follow it ſingly, without murmuring, without diſputing. The life hath fooliſh ways (to the eye of thy wiſdom) of breaking the wiſdom in thee, which is contrary to it, which

which thy wiſdom will be reaſoning and diſputing againſt; and if that wiſdom be hearkened to, the life is overturned in its courſe, and the head of the ſerpent remains ſound in thee, which the fooliſh and weak things (which the wiſdom of God chooſeth to croſs and diſturb it by) would help to break and cruſh.

AN EXHORTATION TO THE PRESENT POWERS.

BABYLON the Great, the myſtery of iniquity, which hath deceived and held captive the whole Chriſtian world for theſe many generations, under forms and appearances of godlineſs and devotion, is at length come into remembrance before God, who is ariſen to judge her, and overturn her ſeat. The army hath been preparing, and many ſoldiers have been drawn forth; the trumpet hath ſounded, the battle is begun, and blood hath been ſhed on both ſides; the blood of the creature on the one ſide, the blood of the whoriſh ſpirit on the other ſide.

The whore (with the power of the beaſt on which ſhe rides, and by whoſe ſtrength and aſſiſtance ſhe makes war with the Lamb) is mighty and dreadful: and it hath long been ſaid, "Who is able to make war with "the beaſt?" (whoſe ſtrength is hers). But the Lord God (who hath riſen out of his holy habitation to judge, and hath begun to judge her) is more mighty; by whoſe arm and ſtrength ſhe ſhall fall, and the beaſt

ſhall not be able to carry her up and down any longer; nay, nor to uphold her in her ſeat of government over the conſciences of men.

Be wiſe now, therefore, and conſider the preſent ſtate of things; and if ye find not hearts to help the Lord againſt the mighty, yet take heed of helping the mighty againſt the Lord. The veſſels wherein the life ariſes and appears, are poor and very contemptible, and ye may eaſily trample upon them: but the life which riſeth up in them is very precious, and too ſtrong for the powers of earth or of hell. The Lord did not appear formerly among you, or of late begin to raiſe you up again, that ye ſhould become enemies to him, or aiders of his enemies againſt him; but that ye might let his ſeed go forth to worſhip him in the wilderneſs (for in this dark land of Egypt they cannot). Therefore break the yokes, and take off the burdens, and let there be no new ſnares laid; but leave the conſcience (where the Lord chooſeth to appear, and which he delights to draw out of the world to himſelf) free to the Lord.

The Lord hath kindled, and is kindling, the fire with which he is burning, and will burn, the fleſh of the whore. Come not near to help her, leſt ye feel the flames. Stand afar off and ſee her burning, and at moſt pity her, but help her not.

We fight not againſt the fleſh and blood of creatures, but againſt that evil ſpirit which captivates and makes them miſerable: nor do we fight with carnal weapons, but with ſuch weapons as are able to reach that ſpirit. Now if ye interpoſe with your carnal weapons, and ſmite the veſſel which the Lord is pleaſed to make uſe of in this warfare, his hand will be upon you: yea, if ye endeavour to bear off the ſtroke from the whore, it will light upon yourſelves, and the Lord's hand (and his ſtrokes in this day of his jealouſy and vengeance) is very heavy.

Do what ye can, ye ſhall not be able to hinder the Lord's victory (who will overcome, even by this very people, whom the wiſe of all ſorts deſpiſe). All that ye

ye can do in taking part with the enemy, is but to bring wounds and judgments upon yourſelves, and to ſhorten the days of your government. But the work of the Lord will go on and proſper; and this painted harlot (which pretends to be the ſpouſe of Chriſt, and has decked herſelf ſo pleaſingly with her ſtolen knowledge of ſcriptures, and lays claim to his miniſtry and ordinances) ſhall be ſtripped naked, and her ſhame ſeen, and every child in the life ſhall be able to point at her; and the ſong of triumph over the dragon, the beaſt, the falſe churches, and all the falſe prophets (who are not made, nor propheſy not, by the anointing) ſhall be ſung in righteouſneſs, even to the Lamb, who daily getteth, and will get, perfect victory: for to him it is given over all his enemies.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE redemption of the ſoul is by the Spirit of the Lord; which he that would enjoy from it, muſt know its appearance and operation in himſelf, and not quench or limit it, but univerſally be ſubject to its guidance and leadings. All man's inward miſery ariſes from man's inward rebellion, which is as the ſin of witchcraft (ſpringing from the ſpirit of witchcraft). His recovery and happineſs is in the faith and obedience to the pure power, movings, and operations of the Spirit in him.

The Lord God, who made mankind, who is the Lord of all, he is redeeming a people to himſelf by his Spirit. And this Spirit will not be limited by the powers of the earth, but will break nations in pieces, and trample upon princes as mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay, till it hath made its way through them.

O! open the eye, the inward eye, which can diſcern the ſeaſons. It is not now the time for antichriſt to prevail, or for proud fleſh to riſe up in its heady will,

to

to ſtop the out-goings of its Maker. This ſeaſon is paſt; and the ſeaſon of the prevailing of the life and power of the Son of righteouſneſs is now come.

Therefore lift up your heads, O ye weak and faint of the flock! for iniquity and oppreſſion muſt fall both within and without; and the tender God of everlaſting love will turn back the captivity of his people, and of his creatures. Be not therefore affrighted at the inward power of ſin in the heart, nor at the outward oppreſſing powers of the earth: for the Redeemer's ſtrength is above all, and he is ſtretching forth his mighty arm to ſave: in the true and living faith of the elect it is felt.

And O ye potſherds of the earth! ſtrive not with your Maker, limit him not, for he will aſſuredly break through you. Think not to ſubject him to your laws; but learn his law, come under his yoke, and be bound by him, that ye may taſte of his liberty. Waſh your lips, and kiſs the Son, and be not angry at his various appearances ſo contrary to your wiſdom; but fear his dreadful name, and his threſhing inſtrument which hath teeth; and ſeek an hiding-place under the ſhadow of his wings, againſt the ſharp ſeaſon of the breaking-forth of his wrath, and jealous indignation for the cauſe of Sion, which haſteneth apace.

He hath long let the ſpirit of Babylon have its liberty, and his hath been ſilent: now is the time for his Spirit to ſpeak, and for Babylon's to be ſilent. Will ye ſtill force him to ſilence, and open Babylon's mouth? Will ye not ſuffer him to ſpeak, but according to the laws and orders of Babylon? Muſt that counterfeit queen ſtill ſit on the throne among you, and the true princeſs be made her ſervant? O let it not be grievous to you, to ſee the Spirit of the Lord ariſe, and make Babylon appear Babylon! Her wiſdom, her knowledge, her unity, her uniformity, her order, her comelineſs, her beauty, is but folly, confuſion, diſorder, and deformity before the Lord.—Happy is the eye that ſees it, and the foot that turns from her.

There-

Therefore awake, ariſe, and ſtand up from the dead. Come out of the thick dark land, where the pure God of life is not to be found: "Come out of Babylon, and "touch not the unclean," that the pure life may receive you into unity with itſelf: but the ſpirit that is unpurged from its Babyloniſh worſhips and practices, the Lord will not ſuffer to come near him. Therefore ſearch what is Babylon, and of Babylon, in all your ways and worſhips; and wait on the Spirit of the Lord to be redeemed out of it, and ſeparated from it, or ye muſt remain ſeparated from the Lord, and not partake of his life and virtue, from which that city, with all her inhabitants, is ſhut out for ever.

The Lord hath had a ſore controverſy with this nation (with her rulers, her teachers, and people) for his ſeed's ſake, which he hath been begetting to himſelf, and calling forth to worſhip him (according to the pure law of his Spirit of life) out of the ways, worſhips, and heatheniſh cuſtoms of the earthly ſpirit.

Iſrael is his firſt-born, whom he will not have any longer kept in bondage. They are his own, of his own begetting and forming, of his own nouriſhing and bringing up; the plants of his own right hand, whom he watereth with the dews of heaven, and with the ſhowers of his everlaſting mercy and loving-kindneſs; whom he hath gathered by the arm of his power, and whom he leadeth and defendeth by his cloud and pillar of fire; over whom he is tender as of the apple of his eye. They are his anointed ones, whom he will not have touched, but rebuketh kings and parliaments, armies and councils, for their ſakes; ſaying, "Touch "not mine anointed; and do my prophets no harm."

Have ye not ſeen, how no ſtrength nor counſel hath been able to prevail againſt them? They have had no fence, but the arm which hath gathered them. What plottings and contrivings have there been againſt them. How are they, as ſheep appointed for the ſlaughter, deſtined to be devoured, cruſhed, and trodden under foot; what divinations and enchantments have been uſed

uſed againſt them, even to blot out their name and remembrance from the earth?

But why do ye ſtrive and contend thus with the God of Jacob? Can ye proſper? He that made the earth, will not ye let him have room therein for his people? Muſt they be ſubject to your wills? Muſt they bow to your image? Shall not the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh have the command of the ſpirits of his own people? Can ye ſtop the Spirit of God from breathing upon them? Or will ye fall foul upon them, if they be obedient to the breathings and movings of his Spirit? May it not ſuffice that they are innocent and harmleſs among you in their converſations and practices, but will ye ſtill lord it over their conſciences? Will ye put the Lord to it, to the very laſt, to try it out with you, whether he can defend his people, and make way for their liberty?

Well! If peace be taken from you; if your rulers, laws, and governments be broken in pieces; if his hand be ſtretched forth againſt you; if he curſe your very bleſſings, whom can ye blame? Why do you provoke him againſt your own ſouls? Are ye ſtronger than he? If ye be ſtronger and wiſer, ye may prevail: but if he be ſtronger, and will put forth his arm, his people ſhall be ſaved and find a ſhelter in him, in the midſt of all that wrath which is pouring down upon you. Your peace hath been lengthened out for their ſakes. "If it had not been for their ſakes" (for the remnant which the Lord hath had to gather) "ye had "ere this been as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah:" The land is full of filthineſs, which the Lord's ſoul loaths; and inſtead of drawing forth the ſword againſt it, ye draw it forth againſt his witneſſes. There is liberty enough for ſin and vanity, for exceſs and rioutouſneſs, for images and idols: but to worſhip God in ſpirit, to obey his pure movings; this kindles your rage, and theſe are the people who are a burthen to you. Ah! how fain would ye eaſe you of this people! (Sion is indeed a burthenſome ſtone, and will fall heavy on all that meddle with her). But the Lord will eaſe himſelf

ſelf of the adverſaries of his life and Spirit, and he will bring forth his righteouſneſs which he hath prepared, and ſet it up in the earth, and none ſhall be able to ſtop him. Therefore gather yourſelves together in battle; aſſociate yourſelves, that ye may be broken in pieces; take counſel together, it ſhall come to nought; ſpeak the word, it ſhall not ſtand: but the Lord's counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will fulfil all his pleaſure, and will delight himſelf in his people, and raiſe them up by the fall of their enemies: and then ye ſhall ſee againſt whom ye have plotted and contended, and what ye have helped to bring about by all your ſecret plots and deſigns. "If the Lord had not been on our ſide, "now may Iſrael ſay;" if the Lord had not been on our ſide, what had become of his poor people! Ah! poor worm Jacob, how often would the foot of pride have trampled thee down (again and again), had not the everlaſting arm been ſtretched out for thee! But fear not, worm Jacob, nor be ſolicitous for thy preſervation, but truſt that arm which delighteth to preſerve thee.

Ah! fooliſh people and unwiſe! who ſtrive againſt your own mercy; who ſee not on what hinge all your mercies hang, but make it your work to break down the wall that defends you!

Jeruſalem is the city of the great king, which is coming down from heaven: and Iſrael is his people; and both muſt have a place in the earth. The Lord hath determined it, and who can withſtand it? What prejudice can Jeruſalem, or the inhabitants thereof, bring unto you? They are enemies, indeed, to this earthly ſtate of things, and would have all brought into ſubjection to the life and power of their king, and all that ſtands in oppoſition to God brought down, and made pliable to his ſpirit; and this the unyoked earthly ſpirit cannot bear. But this is the intereſt of your ſouls, and the way to unity with that life which is their happineſs, peace, and reſt for ever. For if ye could paſs through the fire, and bear the burning up of your droſs, ye alſo might become veſſels for the finer,

finer, and might dwell with them in their everlasting habitation.

The saints formerly had an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom, and came unto Mount Sion, which cannot be removed; and to Jerusalem, the city of the living God, Heb. xii. 22. where the blood of sprinkling, the peace that passeth understanding, the everlasting righteousness, and the joy unspeakable and full of glory, was witnessed in the renewed spirit, which receiveth the kingdom which cannot be shaken, and entereth into the everlasting rest.

And it is again revealed, and the witnesses shall ascend into heaven in the sight of their enemies; even into the new heaven and the new earth, where righteousness dwells; and the old heaven and old earth (with all their inhabitants) shall be burnt up: and then it shall be seen that righteousness becomes, and belongs to, the house of God for ever. And his city shall be a quiet habitation, free from all the noise and hurry of Babylon; where the pure river of life runs clear, free from all the mud and mixtures of Babylon; and the Lord God of infinite fulness will not disdain communion with his creatures, but will tabernacle among them, dwell with them, sup with them, walk in them, and take them into his holy habitation, and they shall dwell with him, sup with him, and walk in him.

But who shall abide in his tabernacle? who shall dwell in his holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, *&c.* he who contemns the vile person (how great and high soever), but honoureth them that fear the Lord, be they otherwise what they will. This man shall dwell on high, above the reach of all low, creeping, dark spirits, even in that holy habitation of life and power, which nothing can touch or annoy.

I shall now conclude with a few words concerning the present estate of this poor distracted nation.

This nation hath long lain wounded and sick: she hath had many physicians (on whom she hath spent much)

much) who have promiſed her fair, but have not effected her cure. Of late her wound hath been much enlarged; yea, ſhe is become ſick at her very heart, and in great danger. Many are ſpending their judgment upon her; ſome thinking a king would help all, ſome a parliament, and ſome hoping for good from the army; but every eye ſees her caſe to be very deſperate. Ah England, England! Thou ſtriveſt with thy Maker, and he overturns thy ſtrength and councils. The life and wiſdom which thou deſpiſeſt, is that which alone can heal thee. Thou ſtriveſt to keep off the ſtrokes from the enemies of God, and ſmiteſt his dear ones; how can he ſpare thee? Hand ſtill joins in hand to keep the Lord's ſtroke from reaching Babylon, which he hath directed at her heart, and will not miſs her, but will pierce through every thing that ſtands in his way. Though the cry hath long been, *Hurt not the tender conſcience*, it is that on which God works, and wherein he chuſeth to appear, and with which he is pleaſed, and pities. Many promiſes have been, touching liberty of conſcience; yet ſtill the meek of the earth, the innocent lambs of Chriſt (thoſe that are faithful to the light of God in their conſciences) are perſecuted and ſuffer. What canſt thou plead, O England! why the Lord ſhould not break thee all in pieces, and ſave his people himſelf, by and in the midſt of thy ruins? The Lord will have the victory over thee in this particular, about which he hath ſo long ſtriven with thee. It would be better and eaſier for thee to yield unto, than be forced by, his hand. Therefore, at length hear his voice, which hath ſo often and ſo loudly cried unto thee, "Let my people "go, that they may ſerve me."

THE

THE

JEW OUTWARD:

BEING A

GLASS

FOR THE

PROFESSORS OF THIS AGE.

WHEREIN,

If they Read with Meekneſs, and in the true LIGHT, ſuch of them as have not overſlipped the Day of their Viſitation, may ſee their own Spirits, to their own everlaſting Advantage and Comfort, by learning Subjection to that which hath Power in it to deſtroy the evil Spirit in them.

CONTAINING

Some EXCEPTIONS and ARGUMENTS of the JEWS againſt CHRIST's Appearance in that Body of Fleſh in their Days; which the preſent PROFESSORS may view and compare with their Exceptions and Arguments againſt his Appearance in Spirit in this AGE; that they may ſee and conſider which of them are the more weighty.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

THE PREFACE.

THE Lord God of infinite goodneſs, who hath ever dearly loved mankind, yet could never ſo appear to them ſince the tranſgreſſion, as to be owned by them, till the veil was taken from before their hearts. Iſrael in Egypt hearkened not to Moſes, becauſe of their anguiſh and bondage. When they were led out, they were ever and anon murmuring, and picking quarrels againſt him. Samuel they rejected (as the Lord lays to their charge); though they might excuſe themſelves, and ſay they had juſt exceptions againſt his ſons. Elijah, that mighty man of God, the great reſtorer of Iſrael, and pleader againſt Baal by fire, his life was ſought for. And though there be not a particular record of their uſage of the prophets about thoſe days, yet in general he complains that they were all ſlain but himſelf, 1 Kings xix. 10. Micaiah was ſmitten on the cheek, and jeered by the falſe prophet who ſmote him, and ſaid, "Which way went the "Spirit of the Lord from me to ſpeak unto thee?" And he was commanded to be put in priſon, and fed with bread of affliction and water of affliction. Jeremiah was put into the dungeon, even to the danger of his life: and by thoſe few that were left, that ſeemed ſingly to inquire by him concerning the will of the Lord (Jer. xlii. 2, 3.), diſdainfully rejected, chap. xliii. 2. Why ſhould I ſpend time in particular inſtances? What prophet can I except? for though all their bad dealings with them are not related in ſcripture, yet Chriſt teſtifies that they did deal badly with them all; ſome of them they ſtoned, ſome of them they ſcourged in their ſynagogues, ſome of them they

killed and crucified, and others they perſecuted from city to city. "Yea," ſaith Stephen, "which of the "prophets have not your fathers perſecuted? And "they have ſlain them which ſhewed before of the "coming of the juſt one." Ye make it ſuch a ſtrange thing, that if Chriſt had been a prophet, ye ſhould not own him; why which of the prophets was owned? Ye have ſtill ſome exception or other againſt us, that we are not the prophets of God; and againſt our meſſage, that it is not the mind of God. Ye take arguments from one prophet's words to oppoſe another prophet with; and from one prophet's manner of coming, to oppoſe another prophet's manner of coming. If John come neither eating nor drinking, ye reject him for his auſtereneſs: if Chriſt come both eating and drinking, ye reject him for his liberty and freedom in the life. Now what is the reaſon of this? Chriſt himſelf gives the reaſon? Mat. xi. 19. "Wiſdom "is juſtified of her children." Ye are not the children of wiſdom, ye are not begotten of the life, of the Spirit of the prophets, and ſo cannot juſtify that Spirit. Ye have got the letter of the prophets, ye are born of that; but ye are not born of the life, ye are not born of the wiſdom. And ſo whoever comes forth in the ſame birth from the letter with you, him ye can own; but if any prophet come forth with that ſame Spirit, him ye cannot own. He that is born after the fleſh, cannot but perſecute him that is born after the Spirit. Jeruſalem was all along the perſecutor of the prophets, from the beginning to the end.

And is this nothing to you, O ye profeſſors of this age! Search and ſee who have been the perſecutors among you, but they who have had the name of the church and her prophets? Who have ſlain the witneſſes? The church of Rome hath ſlain the witneſſes againſt her, and the Proteſtants have ſlain the witneſſes againſt them. About the beginning of theſe troubles, if a man were never ſo truly zealous, yet if he could not conform to the Common-prayer-book and ceremonies, how was he perſecuted? A Non-conformiſt, a Separatiſt,

paratiſt, a Browniſt, an Anabaptiſt, though owning the ſame Chriſt in his very heart and ſoul; yet, becauſe his practice was a teſtimony againſt the falſe church-worſhip of the common Proteſtant, muſt be hunted up and down to courts, impriſoned, fined, baniſhed. And to this day the Lord can bring forth no birth of his Spirit, but the zealous profeſſor hates, reviles, and ſeeks to deſtroy it. If the Lord lay any law upon the conſcience, if it be not ſuitable to their apprehenſions from the letter, how do they reproach, diſdain, revile, and endeavour to render ſuch odious to the magiſtrates, and to the people!

But why ſhould we wonder at theſe things? There is no new thing under the ſun. The ſtate of the world is juſt as it always was. The power of Truth in every age hath been ſtill oppoſed by thoſe who cried up the form. It were a wonder if it ſhould be otherwiſe. I ſhould much more wonder, if the teachers and profeſſors of this age ſhould own Truth, than that they fight againſt it, and perſecute it. Well, friends and brethren, be ſtrong in the Lord, and faithful to his Truth, in the power of his might: bear the reproach, the afflictions of this age, the perſecutions of this your day. Verily your eyes ſhall ſee that there is a reward for the righteous, and your hearts ſhall be ſatisfied with it, when the children of the kingdom (of this age, as well as of Chriſt, and all former ages) ſhall be ſhut out in utter darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.

THE

JEW OUTWARD.

Some EXCEPTIONS and ARGUMENTS of the JEWS againſt CHRIST's Appearance, &c.

THE Jews were once the only outward viſible people of God, who were choſen by God for a peculiar people, who had the promiſe of, and expected, the Meſſiah; whoſe faith and hope of ſalvation was in him; yea, and at that very time they were looking for him, yet, when he came, he was "a ſtone of ſtumb-"ling, and a rock of offence" to them, and they could by no means receive him. They were full of reaſonings, and doubts, and contendings about it; but could never, with all their wiſdom from the letter, determine that was he. Though he lived as never man lived; though he ſpake as never man ſpake; though he did what never man did; yet ſtill ſome exception or other they had from the letter of the ſcriptures, to which his manner of appearance, his converſation, and his doctrine, did not ſuit in their judgment; and ſo, after many diſputes and debates, they at length delivered him up to death, as a blaſphemer, a deceiver, a ſeducer of the people.

Many exceptions and arguments they had againſt him; againſt his deſcent, his doctrine, his practices, his miracles, his followers, &c. which I ſhall refer to heads, to make them more obvious.

1. They excepted at his deſcent and kindred. "Is "not this the carpenter's ſon? Is not his mother called "Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joſes, and "Simon, and Judas? and his ſiſters, are they not all "with

" with us;" Mat. xiii. 55, 56. (What! this that glorious Meſſiah! the great king of glory, of whom all the prophets propheſied and ſpoke great things! Surely it cannot be.) " And they were offended in him," ver. 57. It was this made them they could not receive that heavenly doctrine of his, which otherwiſe might have been life to them, when he taught them that he was " the bread of life that came down from heaven:" but they murmured becauſe of it, and ſaid, " Is not " this Jeſus, the ſon of Joſeph, whoſe father and " mother we know? How is it then that he ſaith, I " came down from heaven," John vi. 41, 42. So again, John vii. 27. " We know this man whence he is; but " when Chriſt cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." This was a cloſe argument, and was raiſed up to eat out a deep impreſſion of his being the Chriſt, as may appear from the foregoing verſe. He ſpeaketh indeed boldly, and deep things, &c. as if he were the Chriſt; but how can he be he, ſeeing it is known from whence he comes?

2. At his country, or place of his education and reſidence, which was Nazareth of Galilee. " Can there " any good thing come out of Nazareth?" John i. 46. " Shall Chriſt come out of Galilee?" John vii. 41. " Search and look; for out of Galilee ariſeth no pro- " phet," ver. 52.

3. *At the time and ſeaſon of his coming.* He came (as to their ſenſe) before Elias. With this argument they pinched the diſciples, as is ſignified in that query of theirs to Chriſt, " Why then ſay the Scribes, that Elias " muſt firſt come?" Mat. xvii. 10. This could not but be a ſore argument in the mouth of the Scribes, who might reaſon with the diſciples on this wiſe: what poor, ignorant, ſottiſh, deluded people are you, to own this man for your maſter, and take him for the Meſſiah? Elias muſt firſt come, and reſtore all things. If this man preached ever ſo heavenly doctrine, and did ever ſo many miracles; yet, if he pretend to be the Meſſiah, he can be but a deceiver: for the true Meſſiah comes not before Elias; and every one knows that Elias is not

yet come, nor his work of reſtoring all things ſo much as begun.

4. His doctrine adminiſtered abundance of offence to them, and they were continually ſtumbling at it. That heavenly doctrine, mentioned a little before, that he was "the bread of life," they murmured at, John vi. 41. When he did but ſay "God was his Father," they preſently flew out upon him, and ſaid, "he made him-"ſelf equal with God," John v. 18. When he ſaid, "Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it "up," they miſunderſtood him, and brought it forth as an argument againſt him at the time of his ſuffering, Mat. xxvi. 61. and caſt it as a jeer in his teeth, Mat. xxvii. 40. When he did but ſay to the man ſick of the palſy, "Son, thy ſins are forgiven thee;" the Scribes and Phariſees preſently exclaimed againſt him, "Who "is this that ſpeaketh blaſphemies? Who can forgive "ſins but God alone?" Luke v. 21. and chap. vii. 49. When he preached very powerfully againſt covetouſneſs, the Phariſees derided him, Luke xvi. 14. Yea, when he did but preach a parable or two about "the widow "of Sarepta, and Naaman the Syrian" (it coming a little cloſe to their ſtate) "all they in the ſynagogue "were ſo filled with wrath, that they roſe up and "thruſt him out of the city, and led him unto the "brow of the hill, to caſt him down headlong," Luke iv. 28, 29. At his ſaying that "Abraham rejoiced to "ſee his day, and he ſaw it, and was glad;" the Jews replied, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt "thou ſeen Abraham?" John viii. 57. How abſurd and impoſſible was this to them, that a man of not fifty years ſhould ſay, that Abraham (who lived ſo many ages before) ſaw his day! And inſtead of giving them an argument to demonſtrate it to them, he only returns them a more confident affirmation, "Verily, "verily, I ſay unto you, before Abraham was, I am," ver. 58. Which ſo enraged them, that "they took up "ſtones to caſt at him," ver. 59. Now mark: the life ſpeaks what it ſees and knows, and ſo it gives forth its teſtimony. The wiſe profeſſor, not being in the life, cannot

cannot know or receive the teſtimony; but calls for arguments and demonſtrations to his wiſe eye. The life refuſeth to anſwer him; but inſtead thereof, only affirmeth the thing more ſtrongly and confidently. This (being ſo far from that which he looks for, and requires to ſatisfy him) kindles diſdain and rage in him: and he looks upon the life, for this way of proceeding, as worthy to be ſtoned. What! when they ſhould lay before Chriſt a fair argument, whereby they might plainly convince him by evident reaſon that he could not ſee Abraham's day, and he, inſtead of anſwering it, ſhould only bring forth a more confident affirmation, would not mens wiſdom, in this age, even hiſs at ſuch a thing? Yet this was the way of the life then, in that day; and the life may, at his pleaſure, take the ſame way again now, to offend the wiſe and knowing.

When he ſpake of his being "the good ſhepherd," and of his "laying down his life for his ſheep" (and of the hirelings flying, in time of danger, to ſave himſelf) John x. 11, 12. many of the Jews ſaid, "He "hath a devil, and is mad. Why hear ye him?" ver. 20. Many of them that were then the people of God (the ſeparated people; for the Jews were a people ſeparated from the world, and ſtudied the law, and obſerved the ordinances of Moſes) looked upon Chriſt as a man not fit to be heard ſpeak; but as a mad-man, as one that had a devil, as one that might have great power of deceit from the devil, to bewitch men from truth? "Why hear ye him?" What good can ye expect from him? "He hath a devil, and is mad." O how deſperately will bold fleſh venture to judge of the life and power of God, when it hath got a little knowledge from the ſcriptures, and a way of worſhip, duties, and ordinances!

When he ſaid, "I and my Father are one," John x. 30. "they took up ſtones again to ſtone him," ver. 31. and made no queſtion but they did well in doing of it, as appears by their anſwer to his demand, for which of his good works they ſtoned him? They replied very confidently, "For a good work we ſtone thee not; but "for

" for blaſphemy; and becauſe thou, being a man, " makeſt thyſelf God," ver. 32, 33. And when he ſaid, " If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never ſee " death," John viii. 51. then ſaid the Jews unto him, " Now we know thou haſt a devil. Abraham is dead, " and the prophets are dead, Who makeſt thou thy- " ſelf?" ver. 53. Were not Abraham and the prophets holy men? Had not they the ſayings of God? And did they not keep the ſayings of God? Yet they are dead. Such a kind of ſpeech as this muſt needs be from the devil. Now thou makeſt manifeſt from what ſpirit thou ſpeakeſt. " Now we know that thou haſt a " devil." And indeed how could the profeſſors of that age digeſt ſuch things, being ſo contrary to what appeared to them to be certain truth in the ſcriptures.

And there were many other things as hard to them; though the exceptions which might or did ariſe in their minds, are not particularly mentioned; as when he ſaith, " I am the door of the ſheep. All that ever " came before me are thieves and robbers; but the " ſheep did not hear them," John x. 7, 8. How offenſive muſt this doctrine needs have been to them, going carnally to underſtand and reaſon about it? What! were all the prophets and holy men before thee thieves and robbers? Did the truth never come till thou broughteſt it? What became of our forefathers in former ages? Were they none of them God's ſheep? Did none of them find the door? For thou ſayeſt thou art " the door," and thou haſt been but of late. And whereas thou ſayeſt the ſheep did not hear them; that is utterly falſe; for they did hear Moſes, and they did hear the prophets; and we have their writings, and will keep to them for all thee, let who will be thy ſheep. When he ſaid, that " he came not " to ſend peace, but diviſion," Mat. x. 25. how readily might they reply, that his own mouth diſcovered him not to be the Meſſiah, the Saviour, the Peace-maker; but the worker of diviſions, the cauſe of breaches in families, ſetting three againſt two, and two againſt three? Luke xxi. 51. When he ſaid, " Whoſoever " commit-

" committeth sin, is the servant of sin," John viii. 34. might not they well except against this, as condemning the whole generation of the righteous, and making null the way of sacrifices, which God had appointed for sins committed at any time by his people, which could not but pre-suppose their commission of sin? Did not Abraham, Isaac, David, Moses, and the rest of the prophets, all commit sin, and were they the servants of sin? He taught also that the children of the kingdom should be cast into utter darkness, Mat. viii. 12. Oh how harsh would this sound in the ears of the zealous professing Jew, who was waiting and hoping for the kingdom! So in his doctrine there seemed many contradictions to the fleshly understanding: for one while he said, " I judge no man;" for I came not to condemn the world: and yet was not he continually judging and condemning the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Priests, the Lawyers, and that whole generation of professors? So again, he came to seek and save that which was lost; to preach the gospel of peace: and yet another while he saith, he came not to send peace, but a sword, and to kindle a fire, and to set men at variance, &c. Again, one while he said, " I and my " Father are one;" another time, " My Father is " greater than me." One while he bid men do as the Scribes and Pharisees taught; another while he bid men beware of the leaven or doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Mat. xvi. 12.

But to what purpose should I heap up any more instances? O thou that readest this, wait to know in thyself the ear that cannot hear Christ's doctrine; while thou condemnest the Jews, do not run into the same error of unbelief and gainsaying; but wait to know the voice of Christ in this day, and to receive the ear that can hear it: for though thou shouldst be willing to hear, yet thou canst not till thy ear be opened. Nicodemus, who could acknowledge Christ " a teacher come from " God," yet could not receive the doctrine of the new birth from him, John iii. 4. And there were many things the disciples themselves were not able to bear: for

for when, at a certain time, he ſpake of "giving his "fleſh to eat," not only the Jews, John vi. 52. but they alſo, ſtumbled, ver. 61. And who is there among profeſſors that can now bear it, or receive Chriſt's own interpretation of it? who ſaith, that "the fleſh" (which they underſtood) "profiteth nothing;" but the fleſh which he meant was "ſpirit and life," ver. 63.

5. *At his practices and converſation.* "How is it that "he eateth with publicans and ſinners," Mark ii. 16. "Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber; a friend "of publicans and ſinners," Luke vii. 14. "This "man, if he were a prophet, would have known who "and what manner of woman this is that toucheth "him; for ſhe is a ſinner," Luke vii. 39. At the Publicans and ſinners drawing nigh to hear him, the Phariſees and Scribes were offended, and murmured, ſaying, "This man receiveth ſinners, and eateth with "them," Luke xv. 1, 2. And when he went to Zaccheus's houſe, they all murmured, ſaying, "that he "was gone to be gueſt with a man that is a ſinner," Luke xix. 7.

Again; becauſe he healed on the ſabbath, and juſtified his diſciples in plucking of ears of corn on the ſabbath, "they were filled with madneſs, and com-"muned what they might do to him," Luke vi. 3. "and took counſel how they might deſtroy him," Mark iii. 5, 6. Another time, the ruler of the ſynagogue ſpake with indignation about it, Luke xiii. 14. Yea, "the Jews did perſecute Jeſus, and ſought to "ſlay him, becauſe he had healed a man, and bid him "take up his bed and walk, on the ſabbath-day," John v. 8. 16. And ſome of them made it a ſtrong argument againſt him, "This man is not of God, be-"cauſe he keepeth not the ſabbath-day," John ix. 16. What! come from God, and be a breaker of ordinances? Can theſe two ſtand together? Read and conſider. What more ſtrict ordinance of God under the law than the ſabbath? What one ordinance more conducing to the honour and worſhip of God? Did not their whole religion and worſhip much depend upon it? How could

could this poſſibly but be a great offence to them in that ſpirit, and literal wiſdom from the ſcriptures wherein they ſtood? Yet Chriſt, in his fleſhly appearance, was Lord of the ſabbath; and in his ſpiritual appearance he doth not loſe his dominion.

Again; they excepted againſt him, that he did not teach his diſciples to faſt and pray, as John did, Luke v. 33. but could ſuffer them to tranſgreſs the traditions of the elders, Mat. xv. 2. He was not ſtrict after the Jewiſh way of devotion, nor ſtrict after John's way neither; but againſt the traditions of the godly elders of the Jewiſh church; againſt ſanctifying of the Lord's ſabbath (juſtifying his diſciples in plucking ears of corn thereon; whereas their forefathers the Jews were not ſo much as to gather manna on that day); againſt faſting and prayer: for he juſtified his diſciples in that they did not faſt and pray as John did, ſaying, "How "could they mourn while the bridegroom was with "them? Mat. ix. 15. And conſider which way the Jews (in the ſtate they ſtood) could underſtand ſuch an anſwer as this, to reſt ſatisfied therewith?

6. They excepted "againſt his miracles," partly becauſe he did them on the ſabbath-day, John ix. 16. whereupon they concluded he could not be of God (for if he had been of God, he would have obſerved the day which God commanded); and if he wrought them not by the power of God, by whoſe power then muſt he work them? So they concluded, "He caſteth "out devils by the prince of the devils," Mat. ix. 34. "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils "caſteth he out devils," Mark iii. 34. And having thus concluded in themſelves, there was no ear open in them to hear any thing that might be ſaid to the contrary. And again, partly becauſe he did not anſwer their wills, in giving them ſuch a ſign as they required: for this was ſtill their tone, "Maſter, we would ſee a "ſign from thee," Mat. xii. 38. "What ſign ſheweſt "thou to us, ſeeing that thou doſt theſe things?" John ii. 18. And they more particularly expreſs what ſign; they would have a "ſign from heaven, Luke xi. 18.

"What

" What ſign ſheweſt thou, that we may ſee and believe " thee?" John vi, 30. We are ready to be convinced, we are ready to believe, if thou wouldſt give us ſufficient ground of believing in thee. As for all thy healing people, and caſting out devils, Beelzebub, the prince of devils, may furniſh thee with power wherewith to deceive and bewitch us from the law and ordinances of Moſes, which we are ſure are of God; but ſhew us a ſign from heaven, or elſe blame us not for not leaving Moſes to run after thee.

7. They excepted *at the teſtimony which the Spirit of God in him gave concerning him.* When he ſpake the inward teſtimony, which the Spirit of God gave from within, ſaying, " I am the light of the world; he that " followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall " have the light of life," John viii. 13, they preſently cried out, " Thou beareſt record of thyſelf; thy " record is not true, ver. 14. Mark his anſwer: " It " is written in your law, that the teſtimony of two " men is true; I am one that bear witneſs of myſelf, " and the Father that ſent me beareth witneſs of me," ver. 17, 18. How would ſuch an anſwer paſs now in theſe days, though the ſame life ſhould ſpeak it? Would not the wiſe profeſſors of this age even hoot at it? Yet the thing is known at this day, even the life which the Father begets, and the Father's teſtifying of it, and with it. And thou that readeſt this, mighteſt know it, couldſt thou wait in the loſs of thine own life, wiſdom and knowledge, for it.

8. They excepted *againſt his diſciples and followers*, which were women, publicans, and ſinners; the common people, yea, the meaneſt, the pooreſt, and moſt ignorant (in their account), who were fitteſt to be deluded and led away. " Are ye alſo deceived? Have " any of the Rulers, or of the Phariſees, believed on " him? But this people who know not the law are " accurſed," John vii. 47, 48, 49. The common people, the ignorant people, the unſettled people, ſuch as know not the law, ſuch as underſtand not the ſcriptures, they run after him, and cry him up; but which

which of the ſettled ones, which of the truly zealous ones, which of the wiſe men in the knowledge of the law and prophets, which of the orthodox Scribes and Phariſees, who keep cloſe to Moſes, which of theſe believe in him? Whom of them can he deceive? As for the heady people, who (for want of knowledge from the ſcriptures) are ready to run after every new fangle, they are not worth the minding, they are *accurſed*; and therefore no marvel, though God give them up to follow this deceiver, and to cry up his new light, and forſake the good old light of Moſes and the prophets.

9. They excepted againſt him, that he did not rebuke his diſciples, and the multitude (ſpreading their garments, cutting down branches from the trees, and ſtrewing them in the way) with the children that cried Hoſanna to him, as he rode on the aſs's colt to Jeruſalem; but he rather juſtified them, Luke xix. 31. and Mat. xxi. 15, 16. What a ridiculous and vain glorious piece of pageantry would this ſeem to the fleſhly wiſe eye?

10. That he did not ſhew ſufficient authority for what he did. "By what authority doſt thou theſe things; "and who gave thee this authority?" &c. Mark xi. 28. Thou takeſt upon thee great authority over the people of God, over their teachers, yea, over God's temple, ſabbath, and ordinances; but where is thy authority ſo to do? Shew us that, &c.

11. They excepted when he ſpoke of his ſufferings and death. "We have heard in our law that Chriſt "abideth for ever; and how ſayeſt thou the Son of "Man muſt be lifted up? Who is the Son of Man?" John xii. 34. Surely he that is to be lifted up cannot be the Chriſt that is to abide for ever, and not to die! So that here, in one breath, thou haſt overthrown all that thou haſt been ſetting up by thy preaching and miracles. Now which way could they underſtand this thing? Nay, the very diſciples themſelves could not ſwallow it, but were ſtartled at it; and Chriſt was fain to hide it a long time from them. And yet if there be

any

any thing held forth now in these days by the same Spirit (as concerning light and perfection, or other truths which are seen in the Spirit), because men cannot apprehend them with their carnal understanding, and make them agree with their carnal knowledge of the scriptures, what liberty do they take to themselves to speak both against the truth itself, and also against them who have seen these things in the Spirit, and speak them from the Spirit? Now whosoever becomes a disciple, must wait in the obedience to know the doctrine, and not think to enter with that wisdom and carnal reasoning from the scriptures, which the Scribes and Pharisees, and professors of that age were shut out with.

There were many other things which they could not but except against; as at his answers to their questions, to which sometimes he was silent, and gave no answer at all; at other times, he answered not directly, but in parables: (and how offensive is this to man's wisdom, who requires a positive and direct answer?) And sometimes his answers might seem quite from the thing, as John xii. 34, 35.

His not giving respect to persons (for it was a known thing of him that he regarded not mens persons, Mat. xvii. 16.) could not be very pleasing to them, who loved greetings, and sought honour one of another. He shewed not respect to Herod the king; but spake contemptuously of him, as men would account it: "Go, saith he, and tell that fox." He did not shew respect to the reverend and grave doctors of the law; nay, nor to the high priest himself. Nay, he did not shew respect to his own disciples; but said to Peter (when he mildly and affectionately desired his death might be avoided) "Get thee behind me, Satan." How harsh and rough a reply might this seem! If Peter had erred, though his affection and tenderness to his Master, a meek spirit would gently have informed him; but to call him devil, and say, "Get thee behind me;" what kind of spirit doth this savour of? would that professing Jew say, who knoweth not the true meekness, but

but ſeeks after a fleſhly meekneſs, which is a ſervant to the fleſhly wiſdom and prudence, but not true-born. Nay, he did not ſpeak reſpectfully to his own mother (as man's ſpirit, by its rule of reſpect, would judge and condemn him); but ſaid, "Woman, what have "I to do with thee?" John ii. 4. And in a manner denied all his relations, Mat. xii. 48.

Laſtly (to inſtance no more), at his harſh cenſures of all the profeſſors of that age (who obſerved the law of Moſes, and Iſrael's ſtatutes), with all their laborious and godly teachers; juſtifying none but himſelf, and what he taught, and a few of his followers. He told them, that they had not the "love of "God in them," John v. 42. Did not this, think ye, ſeem to them a very harſh charge? And why not the love of God? Becauſe they did not follow him and his new doctrine? Yea, would they be ready to ſay, they did love God, and kept his commandments, ſabbaths, and ordinances, which he tranſgreſſed.

He laid this alſo to their charge, that they did not believe Moſes, John v. 46. What an unjuſt charge might this ſeem, when they were ſo zealous for Moſes; and their very diſlike of him, and controverſy againſt him, was for the ſake of the law and ordinances of Moſes?

Another charge he laid to them was, that they were not the children of Abraham, or of God; but of the devil, John viii. 39. 42. 44. What a raſh cenſorious man might they account him, thus to ſpeak of them, who were the human ſeed of Abraham, who were ſuch ſtrict obſervers of God's laws and ordinances (which is the property of his children), and ſuch enemies to the devil, that they would not be drawn from the truths and way of worſhip taught by Moſes and the prophets; no, not by all the miracles he could work!

He called them "a faithleſs and perverſe genera-"tion," Mat. i. 17, 18.

He told them that they did not *know God*; though they ſaid with confidence that he was their God, John xii. 54, 55. How could they bear this? They had been ſtudying the law and the prophets, and had a

great ſtock of knowledge from thence, and were ſtrict and exact in worſhip (ſome of them, as well as Paul, might be, *according to the law blameleſs*) and now to be told they did not know God? Nay, he that aboundeth in knowledge, devotion, and worſhip, yet not being in the life and pure power of the Spirit, hath not one dram of the true knowledge.

He told them that they ſhould "die in their ſins," John viii. 21. (O hard word, and ſevere judgment!) And yet he had told them a little before, that he judged no man, ver. 15. Yea, they did think themſelves exceedingly wronged by him; and thought that no man that had any thing of God in him could ſpeak ſuch things, but only one that was an enemy to the people of God, and led by the ſpirit of Satan. To this effect they expreſs themſelves, ver. 48. of that chapter, "Say "we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a "devil?"

Yea, when he charged them with *going about to kill him*, they ſeemed in themſelves ſo clear in their own conſciences, that they anſwered, "Thou haſt a devil. "Who goes about to kill thee?" John vii. 29. How eaſily might they cloſe up the controverſy, and by this very thing conclude him to be a falſe prophet? He ſays, we went about to kill him; when (God knows) there was not ſuch a thing in our hearts. Can this man be a true prophet? Yet Chriſt knew the profeſſing Jew to be the murderer, and in and for his religion's ſake ſtill ſeeking to ſlay him. And there is no ſuch murderer of Chriſt (the life) upon the earth, as the zealous profeſſor and worſhipper out of the life. He that is in the life cannot perſecute any man; he that is out of the life, cannot but perſecute him that is in the life. Hereby the true and falſe Chriſtian may be diſcerned by the weakeſt ſimple and ſingle eye.

And then for their teachers and expounders of the law, how exceedingly bitter did he ſeem againſt them? and how heavy things was he continually laying to their charge? He called them blind guides, hypocrites, painted ſepulchres, graves which appear not, and pronounced

nounced woe upon woe againſt them. Read that one place, Mat. xxiii. 33. "Ye ſerpents, ye generation of "vipers, how can you eſcape the damnation of hell?" What! ſpeak thus of our zealous teachers, who ſtudy the law, are ſtrict in practiſing of the ordinances, and take ſuch pains to inſtruct us in the mind of God from Moſes and the prophets? Was ſuch a man as this fit to live? Nay, and he does not ſhew a goſpel ſpirit. Mark how ſharp and bitter his words come from him (for indeed a ſharper ſpeech, with greater vehemency and indignation of ſpirit, can hardly be ſpoken); and they might ſeem to aggravate this ſharp condemnation of his from his own confeſſion. He himſelf had confeſſed that they ſat in Moſes's chair. Now he might have ſhewn ſome honour to Moſes's chair, and to their office, which was of God, and doubtleſs good, and not have gone about to make them thus odious in the eyes of the people. Nay, he himſelf had bid men do as they ſaid, but in ver. 3. of that chapter. Now was it likely that ever men ſhould mind what they ſaid, or obſerve their doctrine, when he had thus repreſented them "as oppreſſors of the conſcience," ver. 4. as de-"vourers of widows houſes, and making long prayers "in hypocriſy," ver. 15. as "making their proſelytes "more the children of hell than themſelves," ver. 15. as "neglecters of the weightier matters of the law, "judgment, mercy, and faith," ver. 23. as "appear-"ing righteous to men, but full of hypocriſy and ini-"quity," ver. 28. as "of the ſame generation that "killed the prophets," ver. 31, 32. as "deceivers;" as "ſuch as led into the ditch; and bid men beware of "their leaven;" were not theſe good kind of encouragements for people to hear them? Yea, he charged them with "ſhutting up the kingdom of heaven "againſt men, and not going in themſelves, nor ſuffer-"ing men to enter that were going in," ver. 13. How could they obſerve what they taught without hearing them? And would Chriſt wiſh any to hear ſuch men as theſe? Yet for all this, without doubt, they were not without their juſtifications againſt Chriſt in theſe re-

ſpects; and alſo had their charges, on the other hand, ready againſt him. Now how did they ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men? Did they not teach the law, and direct men to the ordinances of God, and open the prophets words to them? Was this ſhutting up the kingdom of heaven? and would not they ſuffer men to enter? Why, their work was to win people to their profeſſion; they would compaſs ſea and land to make a proſelyte. How ſtifly might the Jews have pleaded againſt Chriſt, that he did ſlander their godly miniſters, who were very painful and zealous in opening the ſcriptures, and teaching the way of God? Nay, he himſelf could not deny but they taught well; for he himſelf ſaith, "Whatſoever they bid you obſerve, "that obſerve, and do," Mat. xxiii. 3. But mark now, that ye may underſtand the thing. It is thus: any teaching or expounding the ſcriptures out of the life ſhuts up the kingdom: for the life is the kingdom, and words from the life yield the ſavour of the kingdom; but words out of it, though ever ſo good and true, reach not to the life in another; but only build up a knowledge in the contrary wiſdom, and teach to hold the truth in the unrighteouſneſs, where Satan's kingdom ſtands, and where he hath the dominion over all that is brought thither. And ſo this kind of teaching and knowledge ſhuts up the door and way of life, and muſt be loſt, before the kingdom can be found.

They ſhut up the true kingdom; but they opened another kingdom; they opened the kingdom another way (which was in truth ſhutting of it); and they had diſciples and children of the kingdom, whom they tickled with the hope of life, and fed with promiſes and comforts; but theſe the Lord would ſhut out. "Many ſhall come from the eaſt and weſt, and ſhall "ſit down with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, in "the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the "kingdom ſhall be caſt out into utter darkneſs," Mat. viii. 11, 12. This is true at this day in the preſent diſpenſation, as it was then in that diſpenſation; though

though men make it a great accusation against us, charging us that we say none are the people of God but ourselves, and as if all were damned but we. These are mens harsh and unsavoury expressions; we use not to speak after this manner, but soberly open the state of the thing as it stands in the truth (and as it hath been revealed unto us by him who is true, and cannot lie); which is thus:

That through which men are saved, is the dispensation of Truth in their age. The measure of light which God gives forth in every age, that is the means and proper way of salvation in that age: and whereever men get, or profess of the knowledge of Truth declared in former ages, yet making use of that to withstand the present dispensation of Truth in their age, they cannot thereby be saved; but may thereby be hardened against that which should save them. And this we are assured of from the Lord, that as the Jews could not be saved by the law of Moses (making use of it in opposition to the shining of the light of God in the prophets in their several ages) nor afterwards could be saved by magnifying and observing both the words of Moses and the prophets, and their belief from thence of a Messiah to come (making use of those things to oppose that appearance of Christ in the flesh, which was the dispensation of their day then); no more can any professors be saved now by the belief of a Christ come, or any thing which they can learn or practise from the scriptures, making use thereof to oppose the dispensation of this day; which dispensation is the immediate and powerful breaking-forth of the light of the Spirit in the hearts of God's people (who have earnestly sought, and in much sorrow and perplexity of spirit longed and waited for him), after this long dark night of the antichristian apostasy.

There remain yet some other exceptions against him, about the time of his suffering death, with his hard usage, which should not wholly be passed over. As,

1. His disrespectful or irreverent answering of the high-priest, as it seemed to them, when he asked him

of his doctrine, John xviii. 19. his answer was, that "he spake openly in the world, not in secret; Why "askest thou me? Ask them that heard me." Whereupon one of the officers struck him, saying, "Answerest "thou the high-priest so?" ver. 22. The plainness and simplicity of the life (which bows to God, and cannot regard man in the transgression) seems rude and unmannerly to the lofty spirit of the world.

2. His silence at the testimonies brought against him, and to the high-priest when he questioned him, Mark xiv. 60, 61. Indeed either the speaking or silence in the life, is offensive to the carnal professor, who knoweth not the law of the life in this particular; but can either speak or be silent, according to his own will. This is the difference between the true and the false Christian; the false Christian's knowledge and religion stand in his own will, in his own understanding; he speaks in his own time; both which are crucified in him that is born of the Spirit.

3. When he did speak the truth himself, the high-priest *rent his clothes*, and charged him with blasphemy, Mat. xxvi. 64. And those that were by fell in with the high-priest, and said, he was "guilty of death," ver. 66. Then they "spit on his face, and buffeted "him, and smote him, and mocked him, and blind-"folded him, and struck him on the face, bidding "him prophesy who smote him," Mat. xxvi. 67, 68. and Luke xxii. 63, 64.

When they brought him to Pilate, they would have Pilate take it for granted that he was an evil-doer, and worthy of death: for when Pilate asked for their accusation against him, they answer, "If he were not a "malefactor, we would not have delivered him up "unto thee," John xviii. 29, 30. Pilate refusing so to proceed in judgment, ver. 31, they begin to bring in their charges: "We found this fellow perverting "the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, "saying, that he himself is Christ, a king," Luke xxiii. 2. Pilate examines him herein; but professes he can find no fault in him at all, John xviii. 38. Then the

the chief priests accused him of many other things, Mark xv. 3. and were more fierce, saying, "He "stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all "Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." (This indeed was his great offence, he taught with the authority of the Spirit, and not as the Scribes). Then Pilate sent him to Herod (where the chief priests and scribes stood vehemently accusing him), who questioned him much; but he answered him nothing. And "Herod, "with his men of war, set him at nought, and mocked "him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent "him back to Pilate," Luke xxiii. 9, 10, 11. Pilate professed that he could not find him guilty of this second charge, neither of perverting the people, ver. 14. therefore, chastising him, he would release him, ver. 18. but the people, by the persuasion of the chief priests and elders, cried all at once, "Away with this man, "and release unto us Barabbas," ver. 18. but let him be crucified; "Crucify him, crucify him!" ver. 21, &c. Now when Pilate had scourged him, and the soldiers had stripped him, and put him on a scarlet robe, and had put a crown of platted thorns on his head, and a reed in his right-hand, and had bowed the knee to him in mockery, and spit on him, and smote him with a reed, he brings him forth to them again, hoping this might appease their malice, and they might be content to spare his being crucified. They tell him they have a law, and by their law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God, John xix. 4. 8. (See how they turn and wind every way to make the innocent an offender, and to make some law, of one kind or other, take hold of him!) But when all their accusations would not prevail with Pilate, but still (from the sense of his innocency) he had a mind to release him, they used another subtil artifice, telling him, "If he let this man go, he was "not Cæsar's friend," John xix. 12. This carries it with Pilate: now he disputes no farther; but delivers him to their will, Luke xxiii. 5.

Now thou who readeſt this, take heed of judging the Jews for all this wickedneſs, while the ſame nature is alive in thee which did all this in them: for aſſuredly thou (in whom that nature which did it in them is not ſubdued) wouldſt have done the ſame thing, hadſt thou lived in thoſe days. Thou that diſdaineſt and perſecuteſt the appearance of Chriſt in this age, wouldſt have diſdained and have perſecuted his appearance in that age. Do not deceive thy ſoul.

The Jews did as little think that ever they ſhould have put a prophet, or any good man, to death (much leſs the Meſſiah) as thou canſt: yea, they could blame their fathers for killing the prophets, and ſay, If they had lived in thoſe days, they would not have done it; and yet doſt not thou read what they did? The perſecuting ſpirit was ever blind, and could in no age read its evil and bitter nature, and its enmity againſt the life and power. Be not thou blind in thy day, as they were in theirs; and an enemy, under pretence of being a friend.

4. Another exception or argument againſt him, about the time of his ſuffering death, was, that he did not put forth his power to ſave himſelf from the croſs: "He ſaved others, let him ſave himſelf," if he be Chriſt, the choſen of God, Luke xxiii. 35. Is it likely that this is the Son of God, and that he did ſo many miracles by the power of God, and cannot now ſave himſelf from the croſs? This his ſuffering death on the croſs did a little ſtumble ſome of the diſciples, as may appear, Luke xxiv. 20, 21. and was enough to have overturned the faith of any which ſtood not in the Spirit, and in the power. The ſoldiers alſo could mock, and manage this argument againſt him, ſaying, "If thou be the king of the Jews, ſave thyſelf," Luke xxiii. 37. And they that paſſed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and ſaying, "Thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and buildeſt it in three days, ſave thyſelf. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the croſs," Mat. xxvii. 39, 40. Likewiſe the chief prieſts, with the ſcribes and elders, mocked among

among themſelves, ſaying, "He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave. Let Chriſt, the king of Iſrael, "deſcend now from the croſs, that we may ſee, and "believe," Mark xv. 31, 32. One of the thieves alſo railed on him, ſaying, "If thou be the Chriſt, "ſave thyſelf and us," Luke xxiii. 39. And when he cried out to his God, "Eli, Eli, &c." they derided him: "This man calleth for Elias; let us ſee "whether Elias will come and ſave him," Mat. xxvii. 47. 49. And after he was dead, the chief prieſts and Phariſees ſpake of him as of a known deceiver, ver. 63. and ſeem, in a pious zeal for the church, to take care that there be no further occaſion, after his death, for the reviving and ſpreading of his deceit and errors, ver. 64. Thus the Holy One, the Pure One, the Juſt and True One, (in whoſe heart and mouth was no guile found) was numbered among tranſgreſſors, accounted a deceiver, and put to death as a blaſphemer, by the zealous prieſts and profeſſors of that age, who were ſo confident of the righteouſneſs of their cauſe (on the behalf of the law of Moſes, and their ſabbaths, temple, &c.) againſt him, that when Pilate waſhed his hands, as clear of his blood, all the people anſwered, and ſaid, "His blood be on us, and on our children," Mat. xxvii. 25.

Now let men conſider what the great exceptions are, which they have againſt the living appearance of Chriſt in his Spirit (now towards the cloſe of the apoſtaſy) and againſt us his witneſſes, whom the Lord hath called forth to teſtify his name. Many exceptions men have againſt our perſons, our doctrine, our practices, for want of miracles, &c. Is this generation more wiſe or more juſt in their exceptions than the former was? Conſider the main ones a little.

Their great Exceptions againſt our Doctrine are;

1. *That we preach up a light within, and that he that receiveth that light, receiveth a perfect gift; and growing up in it, groweth up to perfection, which in this life (through*

(through faith and obedience to this light or perfect gift) may be attained, and the body of sin put off, and the new man Christ put on.

Ans. Indeed we cannot but preach up the light within, and declare unto men how great things it hath done for us; even that which we could never by any means meet with from any light without. And this is perfect, and tends to make perfect, carrying on its work daily. Now he that feels its virtue, cannot doubt of its power. He that seeth the body of sin daily going off, cannot doubt but he may be stripped. Indeed, if a man strive against sin in his own will, and by his own gathered knowledge, he cannot get much ground, and so it is hard for him to believe perfection. But he that feels unity with that which is perfect, cannot but acknowledge that it is able to perfect him, and in faith and patience is encouraged to hope and wait for it.

2. *That we deny that Christ which died at Jerusalem, and his imputed righteousness, and set up an inherent righteousness.*

Ans. We know no other Christ than that which died at Jerusalem, only we confess our chief knowledge of him is in Spirit. And as Christ said in the days of his flesh, that the way to know his Father, was to know him; and he that knew him knew the Father also; so we now witness, that the way to know Christ is to know the Spirit; and that he that knoweth the Spirit, knoweth Christ also; with whom Christ is one, and from whom he cannot be separated. And as for imputed righteousness, it is too precious a thing to us, to be denied by us. That which we deny, is mens putting of it out of its place, applying it to them who are not in the true faith, and walk not in the true light: for in the true light (where the fellowship is with the Father and the Son) there alone the blood cleanseth, 1 John i. 7. And there alone the righteousness is imputed to him, who is cleansed by the blood in the light, and not to him who knows it not. And as for inherent righteousness, we meddle not with that word, but this we say; That our life exceedingly lies in

in feeling the righteouſneſs of Chriſt wrought and revealed in us; and we wiſh men could come out of the reaſoning about it, into the feeling of the ſame thing with us: for then we are ſure they would not ſo ſharply, nor ſo long contend.

3. *That we deny the ordinances, and means of ſalvation.*

Anſ. We deny nothing that the apoſtles and Chriſtians formerly practiſed; nor do we deny any thing that any now practiſe in the light, and in the faith; but the ſetting up ſuch things in the will, that we deny; or the imitating theſe without the command of the Spirit, that we deny alſo. And this we teſtify, that antichriſt crept in here, and that they are his great cover to keep men from the life; and therefore warn men to mind the life, and to take heed they be not kept from the ſubſtance by the ſhadows, where antichriſt lies lurking, to bewitch from the ſubſtance. And we are ſure that theſe, in antichriſt's hands, are not the means of ſalvation; but keep from the ſight of the holy city, where the life and ſalvation is. And we read that the outward court was given to the Gen. tiles; who "trod under foot the holy city," Rev. xi. 2. And we have found by experience, that while we ourſelves were crying up the outward court, we did trample under foot the city, though we then knew it not.

Their exceptions againſt our perſons are, that we are ignorant, illiterate, and alſo unſettled perſons (who have ſtill been ſeeking up and down, &c.)

Anſ. What perſons are fitteſt for God to make uſe of, towards the recovery of his people out of the apoſtaſy? Doth not God chuſe that which is weak, and mean, and contemptible, that his glory might the more appear? Is not this a more likely way for him to ſteal upon the world, than if he appeared in the wiſe and learned ones? And among whom is his appearance to be expected? Among thoſe who are ſettled upon their lees in the apoſtaſy? or among thoſe who have mourned, panted, and ſought to come out of it, and could not be ſettled without his appearing to them,

and

and fixing their feet upon the rock. But have we been unsettled, since God hath fastened us on the living foundation? Nay: here is no more going out; but he that abides faithful, remains a pillar in the house of God.

Men except likewise against our practices, as that we shew not respect to persons, and that we are not strict (after their manner) in duties, &c.

Ans. We have heard that voice, "Fear God, and "give glory to him," Rev. xiv. 7. (not only as it is written there, but in Spirit): and where the Lord is exalted, the glory of the creature falls; read Isa. ii. how all falls in that day, that God alone might be exalted. And we cannot, in this mighty day of the Lord, any longer give to man that honour which he gathered in the fall, and which pleaseth the fallen nature, and not that which is born of God. And for duties, we have bewailed, in the sight of the Lord, our former running into duties without his Spirit: and we must confess, we can only pray in the Spirit; sing in the Spirit; wait in the Spirit; speak in the Spirit (as that gives utterance), and not of ourselves, or when we will; but as we see life, strength, and power from on high, leading and assisting us. And our religion consists neither in willing nor running, but in waiting on the Spirit and power of the Lord, to work all in us and for us. All these things we look upon to be our duty, and practise them.

It is likewise excepted against us, that we do not work miracles.

Ans. We point to that which wrought all the outward miracles formerly, and which now worketh great inward miracles in Spirit; and we are sure the same power, which we have received the Gospel in, is of the same healing virtue. But that power worketh according to the purpose of its own will, and not according to the will of man (yea, though Paul had the gift of healing, yet "he left Trophimus at Mile-"tum sick," 2 Tim. iv. 20); neither was the will or wisdom of man satisfied in all those miracles which Christ

Chriſt and the apoſtles wrought. It is enough for us to feel and live in the moving of the power; in which we rejoice, and are more ſatisfied (that by it our names are written in the Book of Life) than we could by any ſuch outward and viſible appearance and manifeſtation of it. But if we did work outward miracles, yet if thou hadſt not an inward eye to ſee them with, thou wouldſt not be able to diſtinguiſh by what power they were wrought.

To what purpoſe ſhould I mention any more particulars? Is it not enough? Oh! fear before the Lord! and do not loſe the preſent diſpenſation of life through miſtake (or becauſe ye cannot have things ſuited to your corrupt wills); but know the Goſpel, which is an inward diſpenſation, and doth not conſiſt in outward ſhadows, but in inward virtue, life, and power: "For the kingdom of God is righteouſneſs, and peace, "and joy in the Holy Spirit." Come to wait for that, to feel that, to unite there; and then we ſhall not differ about that which is outward. But it is antichriſt's way, by the magiſtrates power, to force an agreement about the outward, which deſtroys that tenderneſs of conſcience which preſerves the inward.

And now let me put one queſtion to you; Where is the deceit of the ages after Chriſt to be expected? Did the Jews deny Moſes and the prophets writings, or ordinances? Nay, were they not very zealous for theſe? And were not theſe their cover, under which they perſecuted Chriſt, and vented all their malice againſt him? So can it be expected now, that the deceivers of this age ſhould deny the apoſtles writings, or the practices therein mentioned; Or is it not rather to be expected, that under their crying up of theſe, they ſhould hide their enmity againſt the life? Search and ſee, hath not every after-age of profeſſors took up the words and practices of them who were perſecuted in the foregoing age; and under the profeſſion of thoſe words and practices, have hid their ſpirit of perſecution? There is a remnant only among profeſſors to be ſaved; the generality of them have ſtill been perſecutors,

creeping

creeping into the form, getting that for a cover upon their backs, and then fighting againſt the life and power. Oh! wait on the Lord in his fear, that ye may be found worthy to know the perſecuted truth on the one hand, and the perſecuting ſpirit on the other hand, in this day of large profeſſion, and alſo of bitter perſecution!

Now what might be the cauſe, or how could it come to paſs, that the zealous worſhippers of that age ſhould thus err in their zeal, and be thus heady and raſh againſt him, whom they looked for to be their Saviour? How came they thus to *err in viſion, and ſtumble in judgment*, in ſo weighty a matter? Shew unto us the cauſe, that we may ſee whether the ſame cauſe be not in us: for undoubtedly if it be, it will produce the ſame effect, and ſo we may ignorantly draw upon our heads the ſame heavy wrath in our day, that they did in their day.

Anſ. The cauſes were very many; I may mention ſome few of the principal ones; which if they be ſeen into and removed (by that power which is able to do it) ſuch as are of a more inferior influence, will not be able to ſtand.

1. One cauſe of their blind zeal, and bitterneſs againſt Chriſt, was, *Their ignorance of the ſcriptures, and of the power of God.* If they had known the ſcriptures in the true light, they could not but have known Chriſt, from whom the ſcriptures were given forth; and if they had known the power of God, they could not but have known him who came in the power; yea, who was the power. They had knowledge enough of both theſe one way; that is, in the letter: they knew the words of ſcripture (they could make large expoſitions of them), they knew what was ſaid in ſcripture concerning the power of God, but they knew not the thing itſelf; and ſo turned againſt it, and made uſe of the words (which came from it, and teſtified of it) againſt it.

2. A ſecond cauſe of this their ſad miſcarriage in their zeal, was, *Their putting the law and ordinances, and*

and writings of the prophets, out of their proper places. They exceedingly magnified and cried them up, in that carnal way wherein they apprehended and practiſed them, but underſtood not the right end and uſe of them. And by theſe means, practiſing the ſhadows in the carnal mind, they loſt the ſubſtance, which the proper uſe of the ſhadows was to have pointed them unto.

3. *Their high conceits of the goodneſs of their ſtate in relation to God, and of the certainty of their knowledge of the truths of God from Moſes and the prophets.* They were confident they knew God aright, and that he was their Father, and that they were his children and people. And ſo Chriſt appearing in a ſeeming contrariety to theſe (notwithſtanding all his powerful preaching and miracles) they made no queſtion but they might boldly conclude him not to be of God.

4. *Chriſt's coming in a way that they looked not for him.* They had concluded from the ſcriptures how Chriſt muſt appear; and he coming in a far different manner, they could not own him, but looked upon him as a deceiver, one that pretended to be Chriſt, but was not like to what the ſcripture ſaid of Chriſt. So what the ſcripture ſaith of Chriſt's ſecond coming, is hid as much from the carnal eye of profeſſors in this age, as what was ſaid concerning his firſt coming, was hid from them in their age; and he will ſteal upon them as a thief, at a time, and in a way, and after a manner that they expect not.

5. (Which is the main one, and the cauſe of all the former) *Becauſe they were from the light within,* from the true light in their own hearts and conſciences. The light within is the great ordinance of God, and the proper means to give the knowledge of him (2 Cor. iv. 6.); without which it was never received under any diſpenſation: for the light that ſhines abroad, or from without, can alone be known and received by the light that ſhines within. Chriſt himſelf opens this in a parable; "The light of the body" (ſaith he) "is "the eye; if therefore thine eye be ſingle" (clear, without

without beams or motes) " thy whole body ſhall be " full of light," Mat. vi. 22. But if that be evil, if that be dark, if that be cloſed by the god of this world, all Moſes's words, all the prophets words, yea, all Chriſt's and his apoſtles words, cannot give thee light. Can I ſee the light of the ſun, moon, or ſtars, or of any fire or candle, if I have not a natural eye, and if that natural eye be not open? So neither can I ſee the light of any diſpenſation of life, if I have not an eye within me open, wherewith to ſee it. So that that which gives me the ſight of the things of God, is the eye which God hath given me. By that may be read the eternal power and Godhead in the creatures, in the books of Moſes and the prophets, in the writings of the evangeliſts and the apoſtles, as the Spirit leads and opens. Yea, the ſame Spirit, that opened to theſe without books, may again open to any of us without books at his pleaſure (and will not be limited to books); and we then may read alſo as they did, even within in the Spirit, and in the immediate life; but without this, can none of theſe things of God be read aright. Now the god of this world had blinded this eye in the Jews; yea, they themſelves had " ſtopped their ears, " and cloſed their eyes," &c. they would not ſee this way, they would not be converted and healed this way. They would keep up the knowledge which they had gathered from Moſes and the prophets, without this eye; and with that they would ſee, or not at all.

Thus being from the light within, they could not ſee the place of life within, where life is to be received: they could not ſee the womb of wiſdom, which is within, and ſo could not enter into it, and be born again. And being not born of the wiſdom, how could they juſtify the wiſdom? Being not born of the light, how could they know or own Chriſt, whoſe coming and appearance was in the light? For that appearance of Chriſt the life, in that body of fleſh, could not be diſcerned by all mens wiſdom in the letter (the diſciples themſelves came not ſo to know it); but " my " Father which is in heaven hath revealed it to you."

And

And mark it: the disciples who were illiterate, and not so knowing of the scriptures that were written of Christ, yet they knew Christ: but the Scribes and Pharisees, who were very skilful in the letter, could not know him. What was the reason? The reason lay in the difference of the eye, or light, wherewith they looked: the one looked with an outward eye, the other with an inward eye. And a little inward light will do that, which a great deal of outward light will not do. And this I can certainly affirm, that all the light that men can gather from the scriptures, cannot give them the knowledge of Christ as he hath appeared in this age; nay, nor as he hath appeared in any age, since the days of the apostles: but a little true inward light will give the knowledge of this thing, and open those scriptures infallibly (in its season) which all the generations of wise and learned men have been controverting and disputing about, in that wisdom and searching spirit which is never to understand them. This then is the main and full reason of this deep error of the Jews, and their desperate splitting upon the rock, which would have saved them. *They were begotten of the letter, which was given forth in former ages; but not of the life, which was raised up in their age:* and so they knew not how to turn to the light within, which alone was able to give them the true and certain knowledge of the things of God.

Now consider these things well, O ye professors of this age! and take heed that ye do not fall after the same example of unbelief. "Be not high-minded, "but fear." Be not so confident of what you have gathered by your wisdom for truth from the scriptures (after the manner that they were, of what they had gathered by their wisdom); but fear, lest ye should be mistaken as they were: and wait for the opening of that eye in you, which was shut in them; even the true eye, in the true light, by the holy anointing; where there never was nor can be any mistake. The Jews fell by unbelief. Unbelief of what? They believed the scriptures, they believed according to that

knowledge they had gathered from the ſcriptures: but they did not believe in the living word. They had a knowledge abiding in them, which they had gathered from the ſcriptures, but they had not the living word abiding in them; and ſo their faith was but unbelief (for the living faith ſtands in the belief of the living word in the heart, which the ſcriptures direct to; without the knowledge of which, all knowledge of words is vain; and without faith in which, all faith is vain alſo). Now ſaith the apoſtle to the Gentile-Chriſtian, "Thou ſtandeſt by faith," Rom. xi. 20. By what faith? By faith in that word in the heart, which they neglected and turned from, Rom. x. 8. For Moſes had taught them, after the laws and ordinances about worſhip and ſacrifices, that the word that they were to obey and do (the word that could give them life, and make them obedient to all the commandments without) was in their heart and mouth, Deut. xxx. 14. And ſo the prophet Micah, when they propoſed ſacrifices and oil, to pleaſe God with, brings them to this which was given to them in common with mankind, Mich. vi. 8. For all ordinances and laws, and obſervations, and practices without, are but to bring to the life within, which is to be found again there, where it was loſt, and ſtill lies ſlain and hid (even in the field or houſe where it was loſt). And he that ſeeks abroad, never finds it; but when the candle is lighted in his own houſe, and he ſearches narrowly in the field, in his own heart, and the eternal eye begins to open in him; then he cries out, God was in this place, and I was not aware of it. Ah! how the enemy bewitched me, to run from mountain to mountain! and from hill to hill! and hath hereby covered my eye from beholding the mountain of the Lord's houſe, and from feeling the ſpring of my life, which I further and further ran from, all the while I was ſeeking abroad. Therefore, O ye profeſſors, be not ſo conceited like the Jews, and running after them into their deſolation and miſery, but learn wiſdom by their fall! Do not you ſet up your ordinances and ſcriptures,

ſcriptures, after the manner that they ſet up theirs; for this is your danger: for this I clearly, in the light of the Lord, teſtify to you; that if ye gather a knowledge and wiſdom from the letter of the ſcriptures, after the manner that they did, without knowledge of the word within, and without a light within from that word, ye loſe the living faith, ye are but dead branches; and all your knowledge of ſcriptures, and practices, and faith, and duties, &c. that ye here hold and obſerve, are but for the fire; and the flames of eternal wrath ſhall kindle more fiercely upon you becauſe of them, than upon the Jews; for ye ſtumble upon the ſame ſtumbling-ſtone at which they ſtumbled and fell, and it will fall upon you alſo. And as you have more ſcriptures than they had, and the experience of their fall to warn you; ſo your deſtruction will be exceeding dreadful "if you neglect ſo great ſalvation;" whereof at this day there are ſo many living and powerful witneſſes, as they are known and owned to be in the light of the Lord, though deſpiſed in your exalted and conceited wiſdom.

Now to help any honeſt and ſingle hearts among you over this great ſtumbling-block of a light within, conſider theſe few things.

1. That all the knowledge, all the true knowledge, that ever ye had of God, was from a light within. I do not deny that ye might receive your knowledge through the ſcriptures (and ſome warmth formerly in thoſe things which ye call ordinances and duties); but that whereby ye received the knowledge was the light within; the eye that God ſecretly opened in your ſpirits. This was the way ye then came by it, though ye perhaps might feel the thing, but not know how ye came by it: even as a babe may ſee truly, but doth not underſtand its own eye, or know how it ſees.

2. While this eye was kept open in you, your knowledge was true in its meaſure, and ſerviceable to you, and did draw you nearer to God, making you truly tender, meek, ſweet, humble, patient, loving, gentle, and of precious breathings towards God, and after

righteouſneſs. Oh! how lovely were you to God in this ſtate! "When Iſrael was a child, I loved him." God remembereth at this day the kindneſs of your youth, and is ſeeking after you. Oh! why do ye ſo harden your hearts againſt him?

3. That where-ever this eye is ſhut, the virtue of the true knowledge is loſt, and the ſweet fruits thereof wither. The outward part of the knowledge may be retained; yea, perhaps much increaſed, but the life is gone, and the pure ſweet ſavourineſs (to God) vaniſhed. And if this eye were but a little opened again in you, your death and unſavourineſs might be ſoon ſeen and felt in you, in all your knowledge, duties, ordinances; yea, in your very graces and experiences. You have a faith ſtill; yea, but it wants the ſavour of your former faith: ye have ſome kind of love, gentleneſs, and meekneſs; yea, but it is only a thing formed by the fleſhly wiſdom and reaſoning, but not natural from the living ſpring, not ſuch as ye once felt, &c. for the true and living eye being ſhut, that which is then beſt (or afterwards attained) is held but in the dead part, and ſerves but to feed death.

4. The great work and deſign of the enemy of your ſouls, is not to ſteal away the bulk of your knowledge, or to draw you from ordinances or duties; but to ſteal the life out of your ſpirits. This I have experimented from my childhood: I might ſtill have knowledge enough of any kind; but that which I wanted was life; and I was ſtill ſick under all the ſorts of knowledge that ever I met with, and under all ordinances and duties, for want of life. The Lord had given my ſoul a taſte of true life, whereby I became unſatisfied without it, and no manner of knowledge or enjoyment could take me up by the way: yea, when through extremity I ſeemed willing to be content with any thing; yet ſtill my heart was ſick after that one thing, which alone could truly eaſe and ſatisfy it. Now if the enemy can prevail herein, to blind the inward eye, and ſteal away the life within, he hath enough. Then abound as much as thou wilt in knowledge, in zeal, in duties,

in

in ordinances, in reading ſcriptures, praying, meditating, &c. thou art the ſurer his hereby, and ſo much the better ſervant to him: for how much the richer thou art in knowledge, experiences, hopes, and aſſurance, without the life of power; ſo much the more acceptable, and honourable, and uſeful, art thou in his kingdom.

Therefore ſee where ye are. Is the inward eye open in you? Do ye know the light within? (Surely he that ſees by a light within, can hardly ſpeak evil of it!) Or hath the enemy, by ſome of his artifices, drawn a veil over that eye, wherewith once ye ſaw in ſome meaſure? Oh! be not ſlight in a matter of ſo great weight! Oh! pleaſe not yourſelves with the eye of the periſhing wiſdom, with death's eye, and with death's knowledge of ſcriptures and of the Son of God; which ſpeaks great words of the fame of true wiſdom, but is a ſtranger and enemy to the thing! Oh! life is precious! eternal life is precious! To have the word of God abiding in the heart, and to feel the true light give the true life, who can ſet a value on this! Ah! do not loſe your ſouls for a trifle; for a little ſuch knowledge of the ſcriptures as the earthly part can gather! This I cannot but exceedingly deſpiſe, although the ſcriptures I truly honour, for their teſtimony of that whereby I live. If ye ſee not the way of life by the inward light, which alone can ſhew it, ye loſe your ſouls. If the god of the world hath blinded that eye in you, what are all your treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge? What are all your hopes? And what will become of you? All theſe ſparks of your own kindling from ſcriptures will not ſecure you from the bed of ſorrow. O ye ſeveral ſorts of profeſſors, why will ye die with the uncircumciſed? Why will ye go down into the pit, among them that know not the Lord?

But what ſhall I ſay to this generation? The ſpiritually-wiſe foreſeeth the ſtorm, and hideth himſelf; but the ſpiritually-fooliſh run on headily, and are puniſhed. The clouds have long been gathering; but the ſick eye cannot diſcern the ſigns of the times and ſeaſons; and

ſo becauſe judgment comes not as men expected, they grow hard, and wear off the ſenſe wherewith they were ſomewhat affected at the firſt threatening of it: but aſſuredly both judgment and mercy haſten, and they will come, and will not tarry.

For the ſame Lord God Almighty, which confounded the Heathens Babel, (when their ſins and vain confidence were ripe) which they built to prevent any future flood (for though they once had the true knowledge of God from an inward light, Rom. i. 21. yet they ſoon left that, " not liking to retain God in their " knowledge." ver. 28. but running out into imaginations, and ſo building a Babel, whereby their fooliſh hearts became darkened to the light which God had made to ſhine in them; which ſhewed what might be known of God unto them, ver. 19.); yea, the Lord God which overthrew the Jews Babel, which they had built from their knowledge of the laws and ordinances of Moſes, and the ſcriptures written to them (they running out into imaginations alſo); whereby they likewiſe thought to prevent " the overflowing ſcourge" from coming near them, Iſa. xxviii. 15.; the ſame God will overthrow the Chriſtians Babel, which they have built from the prophets and apoſtles words (by their own imaginations and conceivings in the high-mindedneſs, out of the fear), whereby they think to eſcape the deluge of eternal wrath. (For their city alſo ſhall be " thrown down with violence, and ſhall be " found no more at all," Rev. xviii. 21.) And the great work of this day is to diſcover the rottenneſs of their wall, and the untemperedneſs of the mortar wherewith they had daubed it. He that readeth, let him underſtand; but the uncircumciſed in heart and ears cannot.

THE

THE

AXE LAID TO THE ROOT OF THE OLD CORRUPT TREE;

AND THE

SPIRIT of DECEIT ſtruck at in its NATURE.

FROM WHENCE

All the ERROR from the LIFE, among both PAPISTS and PROTESTANTS, hath ariſen, and by which it is nouriſhed and fed at this Day.

IN A

DISTINCTION between the FAITH which is of MAN, and the FAITH which is of GOD.

AND

In ſome ASSERTIONS concerning TRUE FAITH; its NATURE, RISE, &c. its receiving of CHRIST, and its abiding and growing in his living Virtue.

WITH

A WARNING concerning Adding to and Diminiſhing from the SCRIPTURE in general, and the Prophecies of the REVELATIONS in particular. Diſcovering what it is, and the great Danger of it; with the only Way of Preſervation from it. Whereto is added, A ſhort Touch about the USE of MEANS.

AS ALSO

A Brief HISTORY concerning the STATE of the CHURCH ſince the Days of the APOSTLES.

With an EXHORTATION to the PRESENT AGE.

By the Movings of the Life, in a Friend to the Living Truth of the Moſt High GOD; but an utter Enemy to the Spirit of Error and Blaſphemy, where-ever it is found, as well in the ſtricteſt of the Proteſtants, as among the groſſeſt of the Papiſts.

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

THE

PREFACE.

THERE was a glorious day, and bright appearance of Truth in the times of the apoſtles. They had the true Comforter, who led them into all Truth, and kept them alive in Truth, and Truth alive in them. By this Spirit, they, as living ſtones, were built up a ſpiritual houſe, founded upon Sion, the holy mount; into Jeruſalem, the holy city, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of Truth. And here they had their converſation in heaven, with God, the judge of all; with Chriſt, the Mediator; and with the ſpirits of juſt men and the holy angels, which always behold the face of God. They lived in the Spirit, they walked in the Spirit, they prayed in the Spirit, they ſung in the Spirit, they worſhipped in the Spirit, and in that underſtanding which the Truth had made free, and had God dwelling in them, and Chriſt walking in the midſt of them; and, by the preſence and power of his life in them, were truly dead unto ſin, and alive unto God; they being not ſtrivers againſt ſin with man's legal ſpirit, but by the power of grace, which made them more than conquerors through him that loved them. This was part of the glory of that ſtate, in the day of the ſunſhine of the goſpel.

But, behold! a thick night of darkneſs overſpread the beauty of this! Some falſe brethren went out from the true church into the world, getting the ſheep's clothing, making a great outward appearance, and drew the world after them; yea, and ſome from the very churches themſelves. (How hard was the apoſtle Paul obliged to plead with the Corinthians about his own apoſtleſhip and doctrine, that he might preſerve

that

that church from the falſe apoſtles!) And when they had gathered a ſufficient party in the world, they made head againſt the true ſheep and lambs of Chriſt, fought with them, and overcame them. And when they had overcome them that had the living teſtimony of Jeſus, and the true power and preſence of the Spirit among them, then they ſet up their own dead form, making a cry all over the nations of the earth: "Revelation is ceaſed! there is no looking now for ſuch an infallible Spirit, and ſuch immediate teachings as the Chriſtians had in the apoſtles days, who had the anointing to teach them all things;" but they pointed men to traditions, to the church, as they called it (which title the whore hath ingroſſed ſince the days of the apoſtles), or to ſearchings of the ſcripture, and reading expoſitions upon it, and bodies of divinity, formed by the underſtanding-part in man to inſtruct the underſtanding-part. Thus the whole courſe of religion, and of the knowledge of God, came to be out of that Spirit and life wherein it firſt came forth (and wherein it firſt ſtood), and conſiſted in doctrines of men, and a form of worſhip and knowledge which the wiſdom of man had framed, in an imitation of that which formerly ſtood in the life.

And now men being gone from the life, from the Spirit, and his immediate teachings, into an outward form of knowledge and worſhip of God in the wrong nature, antichriſt is got up, and the dragon ſits in the temple, appearing there as if he were God, giving out laws and ordinances of worſhip in public, and putting men upon duties and exerciſes of devotion in private, and he is obeyed and bowed down to in the obſervation of theſe; but the true living God is not known, nor his ſecret ſtill voice (which calls out of theſe) heard; becauſe of the great noiſe which the dragon makes in his temple (for ſo it is now, he having gained it, though it was once God's), about his laws and ordinances of worſhip, which he would have all compelled to, and none ſuffered to teſtify againſt them that they are his, and not the Lord's.

Yet

Yet it pleaſed the Lord, all the night of this darkneſs, to raiſe up ſome witneſſes againſt the dragon, and all his invented forms of worſhip; though they were ſtill hunted, perſecuted, knocked down, and their teſtimony cried out againſt, as error, hereſy, ſchiſm, and blaſphemy; and the ways, worſhips, and ordinances of the whore, the beaſt, and dragon, ſtill cried up as the truth. Thus the Papiſts cried out againſt the Proteſtants as hereticks and ſchiſmaticks, who were witneſſes againſt them; and the Proteſtants cried out againſt the Non-conformiſts, Separatiſts, and Brownifts, who were witneſſes againſt them; and every ſect cries out moſt againſt them who are led further from the apoſtaſy, and raiſed up by the Lord, as witneſſes againſt them, againſt their ſitting down in their form, and not purſuing the guidance of that Spirit, which would lead them quite out of the darkneſs, and not have them ſit down by the way.

Now the Lord God, in theſe latter days, hath not only raiſed up witneſſes againſt the whore, the dragon, the beaſt, the falſe prophets, with all their inventions which they have ſet up inſtead of the truth; but hath aſſayed, and begun to deliver his people out of this Egyptian darkneſs, and to bring them back to the light of the land of Canaan. And now great enemies have appeared; the ſons of the night exceedingly ſtrengthening themſelves to keep out the day-light, every one crying up his own form, and all joining hand in hand againſt the power: yea, and that ſpirit which firſt tempted from God, is exceeding buſy to cauſe thoſe whom the Spirit of the Lord hath been drawing out of the land of darkneſs, to make a captain to return to Egypt; or at leaſt to ſit down in ſome form, or ſome pleaſant notion of things by the way, and not to follow the Lord through all his intricate leadings in the vaſt howling wilderneſs, till he bring them into the poſſeſſion of the true reſt. What a work was there to quench that ſpirit which ſtirred in the Proteſtants againſt Popery, and to fix them in epiſcopacy, and in the uſe of the Common-prayer-book? When that was

detected,

detected, and turned from, the Presbytery endeavoured to take its place, and to bring in its directory; but the pursuit of the Lord was so hot against that, that it stunk presently, and his mighty hand would not suffer it so much as to arise. Much about the same time Independency and Anabaptism appeared, and contended; and there was a more simple and honest thing stirring there, than in the other: and accordingly the blessing of the Lord (which was not to the form, but to the life which was stirring within) did appear more among them. But they fixing there, lost the life and simplicity to which the blessing was, and met with the death and the curse, which is the proper reward of the form: for any form, out of the life, kills the life; and its reward is death to itself. The form kills the life, which stirred underneath, and made it appear with some freshness; and when the life, from which it had its seeming beauty and lustre, dies, then it soon withers and dies also: so that the living principle being once slain, there remains nothing but the dead spirit, feeding on the dead form. There was one more pure appearance, and nearer to the kingdom than all these; which was of seeking and waiting: but death overcame this also, making a form of it, and stealing in some observations, from the letter of the scriptures, concerning the kingdom, whereby their eyes were with-held from beholding the inward principle and seed of life within, to look for some great appearance of power without (such as was among the apostles), to set things to rights; and so they were held captive by the same spirit, in their seeking and waiting, whereby the others are held in their forms. Thus have persons generally missed the following of that good Spirit, which began to lead them out of Egypt, the dark land; and, losing their guide, have fixed some-where or other by the way; resting in some form, or in some notion or expectation of things (according as in their wisdom they have imagined from their skill in the letter) short of the life itself. Thus have their carcasses fallen in the wilderness.

Now

Now this I have to ſay to you all: all you who reſt in any form whatſoever, or reſt in any notion or apprehenſion of things ſhort of the life itſelf, ye had even as good have ſtayed in Egypt, as to fix by the way, and to take up a reſt in the wilderneſs, ſhort of Canaan. In plain terms, ye had as good have abode in Popery or Epiſcopacy; ye had been as acceptable to God there as here. Not that I ſay your forms of Independency, Anabaptiſm, or Seeking, are as bad as Popery, Epiſcopacy, or Preſbytery: nay; they are all ſomewhat nearer, and the laſt of them very much nearer: but your fixing there, and the dead ſpirit feeding there on the dead thing, is as remote from life as if it had gone quite back again. And this dead ſpirit is as hateful to God here, as it is among the Papiſts; yea, and in one ſenſe more, becauſe it makes a pretence beyond them.

And the truth is, ye have gone back again, though not in the direct form, yet into that very ſpirit wherein Popery's ſtrength and kingdom lie; and ſo are become one of the beaſt's names; and your ſtrength and defence lies in the beaſt's horns, either in the outward powers of the earth, or in that inward knowledge of things and wiſdom from the letter, which is out of the life, and ſo are not yet come out of the city of Babylon. For mark: the ſpirit that fixeth in a form ſhort of the life, is the ſame that whored from the life: and the ſame ſpirit is the whore ſtill, in what form ſoever ſhe be. The Spirit that roſe up in the life, againſt the death and corruption whereof Popery wholly conſiſted, was a good Spirit; and this Spirit would paſs through all forms, till it meet with the life.—It is the other ſpirit that ſays to thee, Thou haſt gone far enough; and ſo tempts thee to ſtay by the way. And he who hearkens to this ſpirit, and ſtays any-where by the way, is caught with the old whore in a new dreſs, and is drinking the cup of fornication afreſh. And then, like the Papiſts, he runs to the powers of the earth, to defend his form againſt the witneſſes of God (and that is his cover under which he perſecutes, and there

he

he lies hid), or at leaſt to his own wiſdom and reaſon, to ſtrengthen himſelf with arguments for fixing here, and againſt going any further. And then he grows wiſe in the fleſh, and cries againſt them who are ſtill led by the ſame Spirit to preſs on further, as weak, ſilly, giddy, unſettled, ſeduced people, that can never know when they are well. Thus the wiſe Epiſcopalians reviled the ſimple-hearted Non-conformiſts, who purſued further than they. And the Non-conformiſts, when they loſt their ſimplicity, and began to ſtick, reviled thoſe that purſued beyond them. And thus at this day, thoſe who are preſſing on in the Spirit, are diſdained by thoſe who have taken up their ſtation in the fleſh; and with their two great horns of earthly power and earthly wiſdom, are they puſhing at them.

Look about ye, look about ye, all ſorts of devout profeſſors; ſee where ye are! Are you not dead in your forms? Is not the good old Puritan principle (wherein once was true life in its meaſure) dead and buried there? Conſider with yourſelves; hath that grown in your forms? Or hath it been ſlain there? Speak the truth in your own hearts; can ye truly ſay, from a ſenſible feeling in the life, that that principle is ſtill alive in you? If it were ſo, ye could never be drawn to perſecute, no, nor ſuffer perſecution, ye that have power to hinder it: but if that ſeed be choked, then ye may well connive at, if not further the enemy, and plead for him, and join intereſts with him. While Abel lived in you, Cain could not riſe up in his dominion; but now the right ſeed is ſlain, the murthering nature appears.

O haſten out of this ſpirit! Haſten out of Babylon! Caſt off the ſpirit of Popery: return to the old Puritan principle: do not cry it up in deceit, to oppoſe the preſent appearance of truth, which is grown up further in it; but ſubject that dead formal earthly ſpirit to it, which is fallen beneath it. And when ye are come to a true touch of life there, ye may be able to own the ſame truth in its growth to a further meaſure. But while thou art in the dead underſtanding, and

and from the power and life of truth in thine own particular, doſt thou think to be able to meaſure truth aright in others? Nay; thou meaſureſt by a falſe appearance of things in the fallen underſtanding, and in the wiſdom which thou haſt gathered there, ſince thou thyſelf felleſt from the living principle: and this muſt needs commend that moſt which is neareſt to it, and not that which is neareſt to truth. And this is the great error of this age; men, with a gathered knowledge from ſcripture words, without the true faith and life, go about to meaſure that life and knowledge which comes from the faith; and becauſe it ſuits not with the apprehenſions which they have taken into their minds, they condemn it. And thus, being in the ſtumbling wiſdom, and way of obſervation to which truth was never revealed, but was ever an offence, they ſtumbled at it: and ſo men generally daſh and ſplit themſelves againſt the ſame rock now, as the Phariſees did of old. Now this underſtanding muſt periſh, and this wiſdom in men be brought to nought, before that can be raiſed up which can judge aright.

Hearken therefore to my exhortation, as ye love your ſouls; Come out of Popery in deed and in truth: Come out of the SPIRIT of Popery: Burn the whore, in her new forms as well as in her old: Caſt off all theſe new names of the beaſt, under which the old ſpirit has made a prey of the life in your own particulars, and lies lurking to make a prey of the life in others, and to force it into its own deceitful forms of death, and ſlay it. Leave defending your faith and church by the beaſt's horns, and come to that faith and church which is received, gathered, and defended by Chriſt, the *One Horn of Salvation*. Leave your reaſonings and diſputings in that wiſdom which has ſlain the life, and come to that wiſdom which comes from the life, and ſprings up in the life; and ye will find more certainty and ſatisfaction in one touch of true life, than in all the reaſonings and diſputes of wiſe men to the world's end. The ground wherein mens religion grows (even the moſt zealous) is bad; even the ſame ground wherein the

the Phariſees religion ſtood and grew; and it hath brought forth ſuch a kind of fruit; namely, ſuch a kind of conformity to the letter as theirs was; which ſtands in the underſtanding and will of man, rearing up a pleaſant building there, but keeps from the life, and from building in it. But the true religion ſtands in receiving a principle of life; which, by its growth, forms a veſſel for itſelf; and all the former part, wherein ſin on the one hand, or ſelf-righteouſneſs on the other hand, ſtood and grew, paſſeth away.

Theſe things following ſtrike at the king of Babylon himſelf; yea, even at the very root of the antichriſtian ſpirit in every man; which he that can mildly receive the ſtroke of, may feel the true Spirit of life (which lies underneath) ſpring up in him, and give life to his ſoul: which, when it is delivered, will be able truly to know, and rejoice in, the Lord his Saviour. And when the root of that ſpirit is cut down (which never brought forth ſweet pleaſant fruit unto life; but only ſour fruit, finely painted and dreſſed for the eye and palate of death), its body, branches, leaves, and fruit, will wither and die daily, and truth come to grow ſafely.

THE

THE AXE LAID TO THE ROOT OF THE OLD CORRUPT TREE.

A DISTINCTION between the FAITH which is of MAN, and the FAITH which is of GOD: One whereof is the Faith of Sion, the other the Faith of Babylon: The one laying hold on Chriſt, as he is revealed the King of Life in Sion; the other lays hold on an Hiſtorical Relation of Chriſt, the Fame whereof hath founded in Babylon.

THERE is a faith which is of a man's ſelf; and a faith which is the gift of God: or a power of believing, which is found in the nature of fallen man; and a power of believing, which is given from above. As there are two births, the firſt and the ſecond, ſo they have each their faith; and each believe with their faith, and ſeem to lay hold on the ſame thing for life; and the contention about the inheritance will not be ended, till God determine it. Cain will ſacrifice with his faith, and he believes he ſhall be accepted: if he had not believed ſo, he would not have been ſo angry when he found it otherwiſe: and the Cainiſh ſpirit in man, the vagabond from the life of God, which hath not an habitation in God, nor the eternal life of God abiding in him, is buſy with the ſame faith at this day, and hath the ſame expectation from it as Cain had.

This is the root of the falſe religion; of the falſe hope; of the falſe peace; of the falſe joy; of the falſe reſt; of the falſe comfort; of the falſe aſſurance; as the other is of the true. In this faith, which is of man, and in the improvement of it, ſtands all the knowledge, zeal, devotion, and worſhip of the world in general, and of the worldly part in every man in particular: but the true knowledge, the true zeal, the true devotion, the true worſhip, ſtands in the faith which is given of God, to them which are born of the immortal ſeed; which lives in God, and in which God liveth for ever.

Now it deeply concerns every man, to conſider from which of theſe his knowledge, religion, and worſhip proceed, and in which of them they ſtand. For if they proceed from, and ſtand in, the faith which is of man, they cannot pleaſe God, nor conduce to the ſalvation of the ſoul. But though they may taſte very pleaſantly to man's palate now, and adminiſter much hope and ſatisfaction to him at preſent, yet they will fail at the time of need: for, as Chriſt ſaid concerning the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ſo may I concerning this faith; *Except your faith, with the works of it, exceed that faith, and all the works of it* (even to the uttermoſt improvement thereof) *which is to be found in man's nature, it will never lead you to the kingdom of God, nor be able to give you any right to the inheritance of life.* —For he that will inherit, muſt be the right heir, muſt have the faith of Abraham, the faith of Iſaac; which ſprings up from the root of life in the ſeed; and this leads the ſeed into that ſpring of life (out of which it ſhot forth as a branch) which is the inheritance promiſed to the ſeed. And here is Chriſt, Alpha and Omega, in every particular ſoul where life is begun and perfected, running its courſe through time, back to that which was before the beginning.

Therefore obſerve, and conſider well, what this faith which is of a man's ſelf can do; and how far it may go in the changing of man, and in producing a conformity of him to the letter of the ſcriptures. And then conſider

ſider where it is ſhut out, what it cannot do, what change it cannot make, what it cannot conform to; that ſo the true diſtinction may be let into the mind, and not a foundation laid of ſo great a miſtake in a matter of ſo great concernment.

1. A man may believe the hiſtory of the ſcriptures; yea, and all the doctrines of them (ſo far as he can reach them with his underſtanding) with this faith which is of man. As by this faith a man can believe an hiſtory probably related to him; ſo by this faith he believes the hiſtories of the ſcriptures, which are more than probably related. As by this faith a man can receive doctrines of inſtruction out of philoſophers books; ſo by the ſame faith he may receive doctrines of inſtruction out of the ſcriptures. Reading a relation of the fall of man, of the recovery by Chriſt, that there is no other way to life, &c. this faith can believe the relation of theſe things, as well as it can believe the relation of other things.

2. This being believed from the relation of the hiſtory of theſe things, it naturally ſets all the powers of man on work (kindling the underſtanding, will, and affections) towards the avoiding of miſery, and the attaining of happineſs. What would not a man do to avoid perpetual extremity of miſery on ſoul and body for ever, and to obtain a crown of everlaſting bleſſedneſs? This boils the affections to an height, and ſets the underſtanding on work to the utmoſt, to gather all the rules of ſcripture, and to practiſe all the duties and ordinances therein mentioned. What can the ſcripture propoſe to be believed, that he will not believe? What can it propoſe to be done, that he will not do? Muſt he pray? He will pray. Muſt he hear? He will hear. Muſt he read? He will read. Muſt he meditate? He will meditate. Muſt he deny himſelf, and all his own righteouſneſs and duties, and hope only for ſalvation in the merits of Chriſt? He will ſeem to do that too; and ſay, when he has done all he can, he is but an unprofitable ſervant. Does the ſcripture ſay he can do nothing without the Spirit? He will acknow-

ledge that too, and he hopes he has the Spirit. God hath promiſed the Spirit to them that aſk it; and he has aſked long, and aſks ſtill, and therefore hopes he has it. Thus man, by a natural faith, grows up and ſpreads into a great tree, and is very confident and much pleaſed; not perceiving the defect in his root, and what all his growth here will come to.

3. This being done with much ſerioufneſs and induſtry, there muſt needs follow a great change in man: his underſtanding will be more and more enlightened; his will more and more conformed to that to which he thus gives himſelf up, and to which he thus bends himſelf with all his ſtrength; his affections more and more warmed; he will find a kind of life and growth in this, according to its kind. Let a man's heart be in any kind of ſtudy or knowledge, applying himſelf ſtrictly to it, he gathers underſtanding in his mind, and warmth in his affection: ſo it is alſo here. Yea, this being more excellent in itſelf, muſt needs produce a more excellent underſtanding, and a more excellent warmth, and have a greater power and influence upon the will.

4. Now, how eaſy is it for a man to miſtake here, and call this the truth? Firſt, he miſtakes this for the true faith; and then he miſtakes in applying to this all that which belongs to the true faith: and thus entering into the ſpirit of error at firſt, he errs in the whole courſe of his religion, from the beginning to the end. He ſees a change made by this in him; and this he accounts the true converſion and regeneration. This leads him to aſk, and ſeek, and pray; and this he accounts the true praying, the true ſeeking, the true aſking. This cleanſeth (after its kind) his underſtanding, will, and affections; and this he takes for the true ſanctification. The juſtification which is to the true believer, he alſo applies to this faith; and ſo he has a peace, a ſatisfaction, a reſt here, and an hope of happineſs hereafter. Thus he receives what is already revealed; and he waits for what may be further revealed, which he can embrace and conform to, turning ſtill upon this center,

center, and growing up from this root. And he that does not come hither in religion, falls ſhort of the improvement of man's nature, and of the faith that grows there (which naturally leads all the powers of nature hither, and fixes them here), which is but dead. And now this man is ſafe; he is a believer; he is a worſhipper of God; he is a Chriſtian; he is an obſerver of the commands of Chriſt: when the overflowing ſcourge comes, it ſhall not touch him: all the judgments, plagues, threatenings, in the ſcriptures, belong not to him, but to the unbelievers; to them that know not God; to them that worſhip not God; to them that obſerve not the commands of Chriſt. Thus, by his untempered mortar from his falſe faith, he has built up a wall againſt the deluge of wrath; which wall will tumble down upon him when the wrath comes. The growth of this faith, and great ſpreading of it into all this knowledge, zeal, and devotion, hath not changed the nature of it all this while; but it is the ſame that it was at the beginning, even a power of nature in the firſt birth; and all theſe fruits are but the fruits of the firſt nature, which is ſtill alive under all this. All this can never kill the principle out of which it grows; but feeds it more, and fattens it for the ſlaughter.

Thus far this faith can go: but then there is ſomewhat it is ſhut out of at the very firſt: there is ſomewhat this faith cannot receive, believe, or enter into. What is that? It is the life, the power, the inward part of this. Though it may ſeem to have unity with all the ſcriptures in the letter; yet it cannot have unity with one ſcripture in the life: for its nature is ſhut out of the nature of the things there witneſſed. As for inſtance: it may have a literal knowledge of Chriſt, according as the ſcripture relates; of his birth, preaching, miracles, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, interceſſion, &c. Yea, but the thing ſpoken of it knoweth not. The nature of Chriſt (which is the Chriſt), is hid from that eye. So it may have a literal knowledge of the blood of Chriſt, and of juſtification;

but the life of the blood which livingly juſtifieth, that birth cannot feel; but can only talk of it, according to the relation it reads in the ſcripture. So it may have a literal knowledge of ſanctification; but the thing that ſanctifieth, it cannot receive into itſelf. So for redemption, peace, joy, hope, love, &c. it may get into the outward part of all theſe; but the inward part, the life, the ſpirit of them, it is ſhut out of, and cannot touch or come near; nor can it witneſs that change which is felt and known here. And here is the great contention in the world between theſe two births; the one contending for their knowledge in the letter, and the other contending for their knowledge in the life: the one ſetting up their faith from the natural part, calling it ſpiritual; and the other, who have felt the ſtroke of God upon this (and thereby come to know the difference), ſetting up the faith of the true heir: which faith hath a different beginning, and a different growth from the other, and will be welcomed into the land and kingdom of life; when the other will be manifeſted to be but the birth of the bond-woman, and be thruſt forth with its mother to ſeek their bread abroad: for the ſeed of the bond-woman is not to inherit with Iſaac, the ſeed of promiſe.

Queſt. *What then is that faith which is the gift of God? And which is diſtinct from this?*

Anſ. It is that power of believing which ſprings out of the ſeed of eternal life; and leavens the heart, not with notions of knowledge, but with the powers of life. The other faith is drawn out of man's nature, by conſiderations which affect the natural part, and is kept alive by natural exerciſes of reading, hearing, praying, ſtudying, meditating in that part; but this ſprings out of a ſeed of life given, and grows up in the life of that ſeed, and feeds on nothing but the fleſh and blood of Chriſt; in which is the living virtue, and immortal nouriſhment of that which is immortal. This faith, at its firſt entrance, ſtrikes that part dead in which the other faith did grow, and by its growth perfects that death, and raiſeth up a life which is of another

another nature than ever entered into the heart of man to conceive. And by the death of this part in us, we come to know and enjoy life; and by the life we have received, know, and enjoy, we come to ſee that which other men call life (and which we ourſelves were apt to call life formerly) to be but death. And from this true knowledge, we give a true teſtimony to the world of what we have ſeen and felt; but no man receiveth our teſtimony. It grieves us to the heart to ſee men ſet up a periſhing thing as the way to life; and our bowels are exceedingly kindled, when we behold an honeſt zeal and ſimplicity betrayed; and in tender love do we warn men of the pit, into which they are generally running ſo faſt; though men reward us with hatred for our good-will, and become our bitter enemies becauſe we tell them the truth, and the moſt neceſſary truth for them to know; which they can bear neither in plain words, nor yet in parables. Yet be not rough and angry; but meekly wait to read this following parable aright, and it will open into life. The parable is briefly this:

That which ſold the birth-right, ſeeks the birth-right with tears and great pains; but ſhall never recover it. But there is one which lies dead (which hath the promiſe), which ſtirs not, which ſeeks not till he is raiſed by the power of the Father's life, and then he wreſtles with the Father, prevails, and gets the bleſſing from him. Therefore know that part which is up firſt, and is ſo buſy in the willing and in the running, and makes ſuch a noiſe about duties, and ordinances, and graces, to keep down the life which it hath ſlain: and know that ſeed of life which is the heir, which lies underneath all this, and muſt remain ſlain while this lives: but if ever ye hear the voice of the Son of God, this will live, and the other die. And happy for ever will he be, who knows this! But miſery will be his portion, who cannot witneſs a thorough change by the almighty power of the living God, but hath only painted the old nature and ſepulchre, but never knew the old bottle broken, and a new one formed, which

alone is able to receive and retain the new wine of the kingdom; whereas the other (Pharisee-like) can only receive a relation of the letter concerning the kingdom.

Some ASSERTIONS concerning FAITH, its Nature, Rise, &c. with its Receiving of CHRIST, and what follows thereupon; namely, a Growing in his living Virtue; with a Knowledge of the true, living, unerring Rule, and Obedience to it in the Life.

ASSERTION I.

THAT *the true faith* (the faith of the gospel, the faith of the elect, the faith which saves the sinner from sin, and makes him more than a conqueror over sin and the powers of darkness) *is a belief in the nature of God*; which belief giveth entrance into, fixeth in, and causeth an abiding in that nature. Unbelief entereth into death, and fixeth in the death: faith giveth entrance into, and fixeth in the life. Faith is an ingrafting into the vine, a partaking of the nature of the vine, a sucking of the juice of life from the vine; which nothing is able to do but the faith, but the belief in the nature. And nothing can believe in the nature, but what is one with the nature. So then faith is not a believing the history of the scripture, or a believing and applying the promises, or a believing that Christ died for sinners in general, or for me in particular; for all this may be done by the unbelieving nature (like the Jew); but an uniting to the nature of God in Christ, which the unbeliever starts from, in the midst of his believing of these. Yet I do not deny that all these things are to be believed, and

and are believed with the true faith: but this I affirm, that they alſo may be believed without the true faith; and that ſuch a belief of theſe doth not determine a man to be a believer in the ſight of God, but only the union with the nature of that life from whence all theſe ſprang, and in which alone they have their true value.

II.

That the true faith ſprings from the true knowledge, or comes with the true knowledge of the true nature of God in Chriſt, which it believes in. He can never believe in the nature of God, who hath not firſt the nature of God revealed to him. If a man ſearch the ſcriptures all his days, hear all that can be ſaid by men concerning God, Chriſt, faith, juſtification, &c. be able to diſpute about them, and think he can make his tenets good againſt all the world; yet, if he hath not received the true knowledge of the nature of theſe things, all his profeſſed faith in them cannot be true.

III.

That the true knowledge is only to be had by the immediate revelation of Chriſt in the ſoul. No man knows the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son reveals him. The dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live. There is no raiſing of a dead ſoul to life, but by the immediate voice of Chriſt. Outward preaching, reading the ſcriptures, &c. may direct and encourage men to hearken after and wait for the voice; but it is the immediate voice of Chriſt in the ſoul, which alone can quicken the ſoul to God: and till the light of life ſhine immediately from Chriſt in the heart, the true knowledge is never given, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Therefore they that never yet heard the immediate voice of Chriſt, are ſtill dead in their ſins, and have not yet received the true living knowledge, but a dead literal knowledge, which gives a falſe ſhining of things in the dead part, but kills the life. Indeed the proper uſe of all means, is to bring to the immediate voice, life, and power; and till this be done, till the

the ſoul come to that, to hear that, to feel that, to be rooted there, there is nothing done that will ſtand; but men ſtick by the way, crying up the means, and never knowing, taſting, or enjoying the thing which the means point to. But he that knows God, comes into the immediate preſence; and he that daily lives in God, lives in the immediate life; and the true faith leads to this, giving the ſoul ſuch a touch and taſte of it at firſt, as makes unſatisfiable without it. By this Chriſt cuts off the Jews, with all their zeal and knowledge, John v. 37, 38. "Ye have not heard his "voice at any time, nor ſeen his ſhape; and ye have "not his word abiding in you." There is the hearing of the voice, the ſight of the ſhape, and the having the word of God abiding in the heart, which gives both the hearing of the voice, and the ſight of the ſhape, and keeps the ſoul quick, and living in the life. The voice gives life, the ſight of the ſhape daily conforms into the image, which is beheld by the eye of life; and the word abiding in the heart nouriſhes and feeds the living ſoul with the pure bread of life. But the Jews knew not this; but were crying up their ſabbaths, the law of Moſes, the ordinances of Moſes, the temple of God, the inſtituted worſhip of God, and ſo were ſhut out of the thing itſelf which thoſe things ended in, and out of a capacity of receiving it. And thus many zealous ones at this day, not having come to this, no more than the Jews did, but ſticking in the letter of the goſpel, as the Jews did in the letter of the law, ſtumble at the preſent diſpenſation of life, and cannot do otherwiſe.

IV.

That Chriſt's immediate revelation of the nature of his Father is to his babes. Not to the wiſe, not to the zealous, not to the ſtudious, not to the devout, not to the rich in the knowledge of the ſcriptures without: but to the weak, the fooliſh, the poor, the lowly in heart. And man receives not theſe revelations by ſtudy, by reading, by willing, by running, but by being formed in the will

will of life, by being begotten of the will of the Father, and by coming forth in the will, and lying ſtill in the will, and growing up in the will, here the child receives the wiſdom which is from above, and daily learns that croſs which crucifies the other wiſdom, which joins with and pleaſes the other will, which loves to be feeding on the ſhadowy and huſky part of knowledge, without life. Therefore, if ever thou deſire to receive this knowledge from Chriſt, know that eye in thyſelf that is to be blinded, which Chriſt will never reveal the Father to: read at home, know the wiſe and prudent there, whom Chriſt excludes from the living knowledge. And if thou canſt bear it, that eye that can read the ſcriptures with the light of its own underſtanding; that can conſider and debate, and take up ſenſes and meanings of it, without the immediate life and power; that is the eye that may gather what it can from the letter, but ſhall never ſee into the life, nor taſte of the true knowledge; for Chriſt, who alone opens and gives the knowledge, hides the pearl from that eye.

The true knowledge is only poured into the new veſſel. It is the living ſoul alone that receives the living knowledge of the living God from Chriſt the life. The old nature, the old underſtanding, is for death and deſtruction. The wiſdom of the fleſh (though painted ever ſo like the ſpiritual wiſdom) is not to be ſpared anywhere; but that wiſdom, with all its zeal, and growth, and progreſs in religion, muſt periſh. All mens knowledge of the ſcriptures which they have gathered in that part will profit them nothing, but hinder them. Every building which the leproſy of ſin hath overſpread, is to be pulled down; therefore he that hath only the old houſe ſwept and garniſhed, never received the true knowledge (from whence the true faith ſprings), but his life lies in the oldneſs of the letter (in the conformity of the dead part to that), and he knows not the virtue of the knowledge of God in the newneſs of the Spirit (the veil being over his heart) which is only given to the new underſtanding.

V. *That*

V.

That this faith (which ſprings from the true knowledge) *is God's gift*, and is not that power of believing which is to be found in man's nature; but of another nature, even the nature of the giver. And when man is called to believe, he is not called to put forth that faith wherewith he believeth other things; but to receive and exerciſe the gift of faith, which is from above. That which is to be believed in is ſpiritual; and that muſt be ſpiritual which believes in it. Man, with all the powers of his nature, is ſhut out; it is another thing, diſtinct from man, which is let into life, and which lets man in. For man receiving the faith, entering into the faith, and becoming new-formed in the faith, then he alſo may enter; but till then he is ſhut out, and knoweth not the life, let him believe, and read, and pray, and hear, and exerciſe himſelf in that which he calls duties and ordinances ever ſo much; for all theſe, ſet up in the wrong part in man, only feed the wrong part; and that, with all its food and nouriſhment, falls ſhort of the life. Therefore the true entrance into religion is to feel that power which ſlays man's natural ability and propenſity to believe, that ſo the gift of the true faith may be received: for there is no riſing up and living of the ſecond, without the death of the firſt, with all its natural faculties and powers.

VI.

That by this faith alone, which is the gift which is from above (and not that faith which grows either in the wilderneſs or garden of the old nature, and is fed by the oldneſs of the letter, and not by the newneſs of the Spirit) *is Chriſt received.* For Chriſt can be received by the faith alone that comes from him; and that faith which comes from him cannot but receive him. Man's faith refuſeth him; it receiveth a literal knowledge of him from what it heareth from men, or from what it readeth related in the ſcripture concerning him; but refuſeth the nature of the thing. And it cannot be otherwiſe; for man's faith not being of the nature of it, cannot

cannot but refuſe it. But this faith, which is given of God, which is from above, being of the ſame life and nature with Chriſt, cannot refuſe the ſpring of its own life; but receiveth him immediately. There is no diſtance of time; but ſo ſoon as faith is received, Chriſt is received, and the ſoul united to him in the faith. As unbelief immediately ſhuts him out, ſo faith lets him in immediately, and centers the ſoul in him: and the immortal ſoul feels the immortal virtue, and rejoices in the proper ſpring of its own immortal nature. But the faith of man never reaches this, never receives Chriſt, but only a relation of things concerning him; and with that faith which ſtands in the letter, oppoſes that faith which ſtands in the life. And here is the ſpirit of antichriſt; here is the myſtery of iniquity, working out of one form into another: for antichriſt does not directly deny Chriſt, or deny the letter; but cries up Chriſt, cries up the letter, cries up ordinances; but ſo as they may feed the faith of his own nature, and maintain an hope there. And thus the ſpirit of man is at unity with what will feed his own, with what interpretations his own underſtanding can gather out of the ſcriptures. And thus can he cry up Chriſt, and ſay he hopes to be ſaved by him, while the ſpirit of enmity againſt the nature of Chriſt lodgeth in its heart. This is antichriſt, where-ever he is found; and this is his faith, and great is his knowledge, and many are his coverings; but the Lord is ſearching him out, who will ſtrip him, and make his nakedneſs appear.

VII.

That Chriſt is received as a grain of muſtard-ſeed. Chriſt is ſuch a thing, as every eye, but the eye of this faith, deſpiſeth. He is the ſtone which the wiſdom of the builders, in all ages, hath rejected. They look for a glorious Meſſiah; but they know him not in his humiliation, in the little ſeed, out of which he is to grow up into his glory: and ſo miſſing of the thing, they build up only with high imaginations in the airy mind

mind concerning it. As when God ſent Chriſt in the fleſh, there was no form nor beauty in him; the Jews, whoſe hope and expectation lay there, yet ſaw no manner of comelineſs, no deſirableneſs in him; even ſo it is now: when God comes to offer him to thoſe that think they place all their hopes in him, they ſee no lovelineſs in him, but refuſe him daily. What! this little thing, ſmall, like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, can this be the glorious Chriſt which the ſcriptures have ſpoken ſo much of? Why we know the deſcent of this (its father, mother, and kindred are with us), we find this in our nature. Thus, like the Jews of old, they make a great noiſe about Chriſt, but refuſe the thing itſelf. And this for want of the true eye of faith: for if they had that eye, they would ſee the virtue in the little ſeed, and receive him in his humiliation in their hearts, where he knocks daily for entrance, and be content till this grain of muſtard-ſeed grew up into a great and glorious tree. But for want of this eye, they keep him out, and let in the painted murderer, who dwells in them, and covers himſelf with a knowledge, a zeal, a faith, and hope, &c. in the old nature, in the old veſſel, in the old underſtanding: and thus they give God and Chriſt good words, while the evil ſpirit has their heart, and dwells there, bringing forth his own old evil fruit under an appearance of devotion and holineſs. Hear now, ye wiſe in the letter, but ſtrangers to the life! there is a twofold appearance of Chriſt in the heart; there is an appearance of him as a ſervant to obey the law, to fulfill the will of the Father in that body which the Father prepares there for him: and there is an appearance of him in glory, to reign in the life and power of the Father: and he that knows not the firſt of theſe in his heart, ſhall never know the ſecond there. And he that knows not theſe inwardly, ſhall never know any outward viſible coming to his comfort. For if Chriſt ſhould come outwardly to reign (as many expect), yet to be ſure he would not reign in thee, whoſe heart he hath not firſt entered into and ſubdued to himſelf; which is only to be done by

by his appearance there, firſt as a ſervant, then as a king. But what eſtate are Chriſtians (ſo called) now in, who know not him in them who is able to ſerve the Lord; but are ſtriving and fighting in that nature where ſin hath the power, and which can never overcome, being not in union with, but ſtrangers to, that life and power which is the conqueror! Therefore let all conſider in the depths of their hearts; for this is infallibly true: they that never received the ſeed of life in their hearts, never received Chriſt; and ſuch ſhall never be free from ſin while they live: for having not received the Son, who makes free, how can they be free indeed? Or be free from wrath when they are dead? For that faith concerning Chriſt will not ſave them hereafter, which did not bring them to receive Chriſt here.

VIII.

That this ſeed being received, groweth up into its own form; or is formed in that creature into which it is received. It there groweth up into the body in which it is to ſerve the Lord, and which body is to be glorified when it has finiſhed its ſervice. As a ſeed caſt into fitted earth, or the ſeed of man or beaſt ſowed in a fitting womb, receiveth form and groweth into a plant, or living creature; ſo it is with this ſeed in its earth. Open the true eye, O ye Chriſtians! and begin to read the myſtery of godlineſs.

IX.

That this creature, or the Spirit of life in this creature (which it is in union with, and which is never ſeparated from it) *is the Chriſtian's rule*, Gal. vi. 15, 16. 1 John ii. 27. Heb. viii. 10, 12. The Son is never without the Spirit of the Father; no, not in the ſeed; and the Spirit of the Father is the Son's rule. Outward rules were given to a ſtate without; to men who were not brought to the life, but were exerciſed under ſhadows and repreſentations of the life: but the Son, who is within, who is the ſubſtance of all, who is the life, who

who is one with the Father, whoſe proper right the Spirit is, he is not tied to any outward rule; but is to live and walk in the immediate light of the Spirit of his own life. And he that hath the Son, hath this rule; and he that hath not this rule, hath not the Son: and he that hath not the Son, hath not the true faith (which immediately receives him) and ſo is no Chriſtian; but hath ſtole the name from the letter, having never received the nature from the Spirit, to which alone the name belongs.

X.

He that hath Chriſt, or the ſeed of eternal life, which is Chriſt, *formed in him* (*which ſeed the Spirit always dwells in, and never is abſent from, which is the ſame Spirit which gave forth the ſcriptures*), *he is in a capacity of underſtanding thoſe ſcriptures which that Spirit gave forth, as that Spirit leads him into the underſtanding of them.* But he that hath not received that which is like the grain of muſtard-ſeed, and ſo hath not Chriſt, nor his Spirit (whatever he may pretend to), he, by all his ſtudies, arts, languages, reading of expoſitors, conferences, nay, experiences, can never come to the true knowledge of the ſcriptures; for he wants the true key, which alone can open. He may have got a great many wrong keys, none of which can open; but he wants the true key, of the true knowledge, and ſo is ſhut out of that; and only let into ſuch a kind of knowledge as the wrong key can open into. And with this kind of knowledge the merchants of Babylon have long traded; but their day is expiring apace, and their night of lamentation and howling haſteneth.

XI.

Though he can underſtand the ſcriptures, as the Spirit leads him into the knowledge of them, and can ſet his ſeal to the truth of them, yet he cannot call them his rule: For, having received the life for his rule, and knowing it to be ſo, he cannot call another thing it. He that hath received the new covenant into his heart, with the laws of

of the life thereof written there by the Spirit of life, who doth write them there, even in the leaſt of all that believe, as well as in the greateſt, he knoweth that this living writing is his rule. The ſcriptures give relation where the covenant and law of life is written; and if I will read it, thither muſt I go, whither the ſcriptures point me. I muſt go to Chriſt the book of life, and read there with that eye which Chriſt gives, if I read the things of life. And the ſcriptures are willing to ſurrender up their glory to Chriſt, who was before them, and is above them, and ſhall be after them. But there is a falſe ſpirit, which hath ſeated itſelf in a literal knowledge of the ſcriptures, and hath formed images and likeneſſes of truth from it (every one after the imaginations of his own heart); and all theſe fall, if Chriſt the life appear: and ſo this ſpirit cries up the ſcriptures now in a way of deceit, juſt as the Jews cried up Moſes. It was a good remove, to withdraw the ear from the falſe church, and to liſten to the true teſtimony which the ſcriptures give of Chriſt: but it is the ſeducing ſpirit which tempts to ſtick by the way, and to rear up buildings and forms of knowledge from the letter of the ſcriptures, and not come to feel after, unite with, and live in, Chriſt the life. And unleſs ye come to this, your reading of the ſcripture is vain, and all your gathering rules of practice, and comforts from promiſes, will end in vanity: for until ye know, and have received the thing itſelf, ye are at a diſtance from that to which all belongs. A lively and glorious teſtimony of truth hath God held forth in this age, at which all that ſtick in the letter cannot but ſtumble; and there is no poſſibility of knowing or receiving it, but by feeling the true touch of the inward life of it. "Wiſdom is juſtified of her children:" but they that are not born of her, cannot juſtify her womb or birth.

To the Jews, who were an outward people, there was an outward rule given, a law of commandments, ſtatutes, judgments, and ordinances, proper to that

ſtate wherein they were, and to that thing to which the miniſtry was: but all this was to be done away, and to end in that which all this repreſented. So that to Chriſtians, Chriſt the ſubſtance being come, which is the end of all theſe ſhadows, the true Jew being raiſed in the immediate life, now there is a neceſſity for the immediate life for the rule. To them under the goſpel, to them who are come to the ſubſtance, to them who are begotten and born in the life, there can be no rule proportionable to their ſtate, but Chriſt the ſubſtance, Chriſt the life. Here he alone is the light, the way, the truth, the rule; the Spirit is here the rule, the new creature is the rule, the new covenant the rule; all which are in unity together, and he that hath one of them hath them all, and he that hath not them all, hath none of them. So that directions taken out of the ſcripture, cannot be the rule to him who is the true Chriſtian; but the meaſure of grace, the meaſure of the light, the meaſure of the Spirit, the meaſure of the gift received into the living ſoul from the ſpring of life, this is the alone rule of life. But Chriſtians in the degeneration have loſt this, and ſo have taken up words for a rule (which were not given to that end); and ſo with deductions by the earthly part, they feed the earthly part. What is fed by mens ſcripture knowledge, but the earthly underſtanding? The earthly will heated; the earthly affections warmed? And of the fruits of this earth they bring ſacrifices to God: and they are angry that God hath raiſed up Abel, their younger brother, who offers up the Lamb of God to God, and ſerves the living God, in his own living Spirit, and with the faith which comes from him. Abel's religion ſtands not in that part wherein all other mens religion ſtands, but in the death of that part; and in the raiſing up of another part, wherein life ſprings. Can ye mildly receive theſe gentle leadings? Do not provoke the tender heart of the Lamb againſt you, who alſo hath the voice of a lion, and can roar terribly out of his holy mountain againſt the enemies of his life and Spirit.

A Nc-

A Neceſſary WARNING,

And of very great Importance to all that call themſelves CHRISTIANS, and hope for a Share in the Book of LIFE, and the eſcaping the Damnation of Hell; which is their Portion whoſe Names are written in the Book of Death, and blotted by GOD out of the Book of LIFE, though they hope to find them written there.

HEAR and CONSIDER.

IT is recorded, Rev. xxii. 18, 19. "If any man ſhall "add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him "the plagues that are written in this book. And if "any man ſhall take away from the words of the book "of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out "of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and "from the things which are written in this book."

Great are the plagues that are written in this book, even *the pouring out of eternal wrath without mixture; torment day and night, in the preſence of the Lamb*, &c. As the growth and fulneſs of the myſtery of iniquity are ſpoken of in this book, ſo the meaſuring out of the fulneſs of wrath to it, is ſpoken of alſo. And great is the life and bleſſedneſs that is here promiſed, to thoſe that fight with, and overcome, the myſtery of iniquity; and receive not any marks or names of the beaſt, nor are ſubject to any of his horns, though he puſh ever ſo hard with them. Now to meet with all the plagues here threatened, and to miſs of all the bleſſedneſs here promiſed, is it not a ſad ſtate? Why, he that addeth to theſe things here ſpoken, or diminiſh-

eth from the words of this prophecy, the Lord hath ſaid this ſhall befall him. Therefore, in the fear of that God who hath ſpoken this, and will make it good, let every one ſearch, who is the adder, who is the diminiſher?

Now mark, ſee if this be not a clear thing. He that giveth any other meaning of any ſcripture, than what is the true proper meaning thereof, he both addeth and diminiſheth; he taketh away the true ſenſe, he addeth a ſenſe that is not true. The Spirit of the Lord is the true expoſitor of ſcriptures; he never addeth nor diminiſheth: but man, being without that Spirit, doth but gueſs, doth but imagine, doth but ſtudy or invent a meaning, and ſo he is ever adding or diminiſhing. This is the ſenſe, ſaith one; this is the ſenſe, ſaith another; this is the ſenſe, ſaith a third; this, ſaith a fourth: another that is witty, and large in his comprehenſion, he ſays they will all ſtand; another, perhaps more witty than he, ſays none of them will ſtand, and he invents a meaning different from them all. And then, when they are thus expounding them, they will ſay, take the ſenſe thus, it will yield this obſervation; or take it thus, and it will afford this obſervation. Doth not this plainly ſhew, that he who thus ſaith, hath not the Spirit of the Lord to open the ſcripture to him, and manifeſt which is the true ſenſe, but is working in the myſtery of darkneſs? And yet this very perſon, who is thus working with his own dark ſpirit in the dark, will in words confeſs, that there is no true underſtanding or opening of ſcripture, but by the Spirit of God. If it be ſo, how dareſt thou ſet thy imagination, thy fancy, thy reaſon, thy underſtanding on work, and ſo be gueſſing at that which the Spirit doth not open to thee, and ſo art found adding and diminiſhing?

Now he that is the adder, he that is the diminiſher, he crieth out againſt the Spirit of the Lord, and chargeth him with adding and diminiſhing: for man being judge, he will judge his own way to be true, and God's to be falſe. That which is the adding and diminiſhing,

miniſhing, he calls the true expounding of the place; but if the Spirit of the Lord immediately open any thing to any ſon or daughter, he cries, This is an adding to the word: the ſcripture is written; there are no more revelations to be expected now; the curſe, ſaith he, is to them that add. Thus he removes the curſe from his own ſpirit, and way of ſtudy and invention, to which it appertains; and caſts it upon the Spirit of the Lord. And man cannot poſſibly avoid this in the way that he is in; for having firſt judged his own darkneſs to be light, then in the next place he muſt needs judge the true light to be darkneſs. He that hath afore-hand ſet up his own invented meaning of any ſcripture to be the true meaning, he muſt needs oppoſe the true meaning, and call it falſe, and ſo apply himſelf to form all the arguments he can out of other ſcriptures, to make it appear falſe. Thus man, having begun wrong in his knowledge of the ſcriptures, ſtands engaged to make uſe of them againſt the Lord, and againſt his own ſoul; and yet really in himſelf thinks that he makes a right uſe of them, and that he ſerves the Lord, and that he is not oppoſing his truth, but oppoſing error and hereſy; while he himſelf is in the error, and in the hereſy, and againſt the truth; being a ſtranger to that Spirit, in whoſe immediate life and preſence the truth grows.

Did the Lord, in theſe words of forbidding to add or diminiſh upon ſo great a penalty, lay a reſtraint and limit upon his own Spirit, that it ſhould no more hereafter ſpeak in his ſons and daughters; or did he intend to lay bounds upon the unruly ſpirit of man? Did God leave man's ſpirit at liberty to invent and form meanings of his words, and bind up his own Spirit from ſpeaking further words afterwards? When Moſes ſaid, Thou ſhalt not add or diminiſh, was this to be any ſtop to the prophets, in whom God ſhould ſpeak afterwards? Is not this one of the ſubtil ſerpent's inventions, to keep up the eſteem of man's invented meanings as the true ſenſe, and to make a fortification againſt the entrance of that Spirit, which can diſcover

all his falſe interpretations of the true words of God, and to make him ſee that he is the adder and the diminiſher, and that his name will not be found in the book of life, when the true light is held forth to read by.

But this is general, extending to all ſcriptures; my drift is more particularly concerning adding to the things, or diminiſhing from the words of the book of this prophecy.

There are two things chiefly ſpoken of in this book; Myſtery Sion, Myſtery Babylon; the true church, the falſe church; the Lamb's wife, the whore; the hiding of Myſtery Sion, the appearing of Myſtery Babylon in her place; the flying of the church out of her heaven into the wilderneſs, leaving all behind her which ſhe could not carry along with her; even all the ordinances and inſtitutions of Chriſt, wherein once ſhe appeared worſhipping and ſerving God; and the ſtarting of the falſe church into her place; taking up all that ſhe had left, even all the ordinances and inſtitutions of Chriſt in the letter; thus covering herſelf with the form of godlineſs, with the ſheeps clothing, that ſhe might paſs the better for the true church: and the dragon who managed the war againſt the woman and her ſeed, raiſeth up firſt one beaſt, and then another, and ſets this whore on the top of them; who with the cup of fornication makes all the earth drunk, all nations, peoples, kindreds, tongues, languages. And the beaſt has his horns every-where; his marks every-where; his names every-where; and alſo his image in every part of Babylon. And who will not worſhip him, he fights with; yea, ſuch as are led by God to rent from the whore, he calls ſchiſmaticks, hereticks, blaſphemers, and perſecutes them as perſons not worthy to live. Thus the ſtate of things is quite changed, the power of truth loſt, the form ſet up without it; thoſe that ſeek after the power hated, perſecuted, and blaſphemed; but thoſe that lie ſtill under any of the beaſt's forms, go for good Chriſtians; for members of the viſible church, ſo called by them.

Now

Now mark: he that calls any thing the church, but what this book calls the church, he adds: he that doth not know the wilderneſs, and own the church in the wilderneſs, he diminiſhes. The church of Rome is not the church in the wilderneſs; the church of Scotland is not the church in the wilderneſs; and the church of England is not the church in the wilderneſs; the ſeveral gathered churches are none of them the church in the wilderneſs: all theſe have ſprung up ſince the churches flight, and have appeared in her abſence, uſurping her name, appropriating it to themſelves; but God (who gave it to the church) hath not given it to them; and ſo they muſt loſe it again, when God brings back the church out of the wilderneſs. So he that calls thoſe, which formerly were the inſtitutions and ordinances of Chriſt, which the woman left behind her, and which the harlot hath got and attired herſelf with, which ſhe now appears in, and wherewith the dragon is now worſhipped, he adds to this book, which ſays the outward court was given to the Gentiles, and the true church had nothing left her but the inward temple, wherein alone the true worſhippers worſhipped; and they that worſhip elſewhere, are the falſe worſhippers, worſhipping in falſe temples, in temples of the whoriſh ſpirit's building; take it either outwardly or inwardly, for it holds true in both. He that makes the beaſt's names fewer than they are, or his marks fewer than they are, or his horns fewer than they are, or his image leſs than it is, he diminiſhes. And the danger hereof is not ſmall; "For if any man worſhip the beaſt and his image, "and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, "the ſame ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of "God, which is poured out without mixture into the "cup of his indignation, and he ſhall be tormented "with fire and brimſtone in the preſence of the holy "angels, and in the preſence of the lamb: and the "ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and "ever, and they have no reſt day nor night, who wor-

" ſhip the beaſt and his image, and whoſoever receiv-
" eth the mark of his name," Rev. xiv. 9, &c.

Now this I affirm: Whoſoever has not the name of Sion, the mark of Sion, which he received of her in the wilderneſs, where the living God is with her, and where he is taught by God the laws of the wilderneſs-worſhip, and in ſome meaſure to teſtify againſt all the corrupted ordinances and inſtitutions which have the beaſt's mark, and go now abroad in the world under the beaſt's name: I ſay, whoever has not the true mark of Sion, it is impoſſible for him to avoid the mark of Babylon. And he who avoids not the mark, cannot eſcape the plagues. But he that hath the mark of Sion, is, by a ſecret inward inſtinct of true life, led from the marks of Babylon; and (if he faithfully follow the guidance of it) from out of all the names, and from under all the horns.

It is not enough to rent from Popery, and ſit down under the power and government of the ſame ſpirit in another form; or to rent from Epiſcopacy, and the ſame ſpirit ſit down in Preſbytery; or to rent from Preſbytery, and the ſame ſpirit ſit down in a form of Independency, or Anabaptiſm; or to rent from theſe, and the ſame ſpirit ſit down in a way of ſeeking and waiting, and reading of words of ſcripture, and gathering things from thence without the life: but the true religion conſiſts in knowing and following a true guide to the church in the wilderneſs, and there to receive the mark, the living mark, which will preſerve out of all invention, and further progreſs of the dead ſpirit.

Now therefore look about you; know the ſpirit of whoredom, and ſee how ye have been begotten in the adultery, and born of the whore, and have ſerved the dragon, and worſhipped his dead idols, and not the living God. And be not ſatisfied with changing of forms and dreſſes (which are but the ſeveral deceitful appearances of the whore), but put off that ſpirit; leſt when ye have hated the whore, and burnt her fleſh as ſhe appeared in one form, ye give yourſelves up to her again, when ſhe appears in another form: for the plagues

plagues are not ſo much to the form wherein the whore appears, as to the whoriſh ſpirit: and whoſoever is found under her dominion, in any of her territories, under any of her forms, with that mark of hers upon them which belongs to that particular form, though ever ſo curiouſly painted, he ſhall drink of the unmixed cup of wrath.

Therefore tremble all ſorts of people! pluck off your falſe coverings; ſee the ſhame of your nakedneſs, while it may be for your advantage ſo to do. The angel is gone forth, the corn is reaping and gathering into the garner, many lambs are brought into the fold of everlaſting reſt, Sion is redeeming, the true life is riſing, the whoriſh ſpirit is judging, the door of life is yet open. Do not lie ſecure in the whore's wiſdom! Do not lie ſlumbering, and reaſoning, and diſputing from the letter of the ſcripture, till the gathering be finiſhed, till the door be ſhut, till the eternal flames ſeize upon you, and ye find yourſelves in the boſom of hell unawares, and ſee the children of the kingdom in Abraham's boſom, but yourſelves ſhut out, and left to weep, and wail, and gnaſh your teeth.

Queſt. *But how may I avoid adding to the things, and diminiſhing from the words, of this prophecy, and of other ſcriptures; that I may not meet with the weight of this curſe, or miſs of the bleſſing?*

Anſ. Doſt thou aſk this queſtion from thy heart, in the ſimplicity, out of the fleſhly wiſdom? Then hearken with that ear, and thou ſhalt ſet thy ſeal to mine anſwer.

1. Wait for the key of knowledge, which is God's free gift. Do not go with a falſe key to the ſcriptures of Truth; for it will not open them. Man is too haſty to know the meaning of the ſcriptures, and to enter into the things of God, and ſo he climbs up over the door with his own underſtanding; but he has not patience to wait to know the door, and to receive the key which opens and ſhuts the door; and by this means he gathers death out of words which came from life. And this I dare poſitively affirm, that all that have

have gone this way to work have but a dead knowledge; and it is death in them that feeds upon this knowledge, and the life is not raised. Consider now the weight of this counsel in the true balance: there is no opening of the scriptures but by the true key, nor is there any coming at the key till the Lord please to give it. What then is to be done, but only to wait (in the silence of that part which would be forward, and running before-hand) till the key be given, and to know how to receive it, as it is offered in the light; and not to wait in the will, or expect to receive it according to observations in the fleshly wisdom from the letter.

2. Let not thy understanding have the managing of this key, when it is given; but know the true opener, the skilful user of the key, the hand which can only turn the key aright; and let him have the managing both of his own key, and of thine understanding. Do not run in thine own understanding, or in thine own will, to search out the meaning of scripture; for then thou feedest with the scripture that which it is the intent of all words of life to destroy: but as thou waitedst for the key at first, so continually wait for the appearances and movings of the user of the key, and he will shut out thy understanding and will continually, which would still be running after the literal part of scriptures; and let thee into the life both of the prophecies and doctrines thereof. Man, when he hath received a true gift from God, he would be managing of it himself, and to be sure he will manage it for himself (for the gratifying and pleasing of himself, and not for God); and then God, being provoked, takes away the substance, and leaves him the shell. Therefore he that hath received a gift must be very watchful against that which would betray, or he may easily lose it: for though the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; yet if that lay hold of the gift which was not called, and to which it was not given, the Lord will thrust that by, and take away his gift from it.

3. Do

3. Do not graft any of the fruit of the tree of life upon the tree of knowledge; for it will not grow there: an appearance, a likeneſs of the true fruit may grow there: but the true fruit itſelf will not. My meaning is, do not make a treaſury of knowledge in the underſtanding-part, which is to periſh; but know the true treaſury of all the things of life, which is in the life itſelf; and in that underſtanding which is formed, kept, and lives in the life. Lay no manna by to feed upon in the old ſtore-houſe (leſt the fleſhly part ſhould be running thither, when its fleſhly appetite is kindled after food); but daily receive the continual bread from the hand of life. The wiſdom of the life ſtrikes at thy wiſdom and underſtanding; and if ever thou wilt grow wiſe any more, thou loſeſt this, and canſt not poſſibly retain it: for that part is then getting up in thee, in which it cannot be held: but only a ſhadow, an image, a reſemblance and likeneſs of it, which feeds and pleaſes that part which fain would have life, but cannot know it; and therefore is neceſſitated to make images and likeneſſes of things in heaven, or things in earth, that it might have ſomewhat.

4. Take not up a reſt in openings of things, though by the true key. Take heed of over-valuing that kind of knowledge: for that part which over-values that knowledge will preſently be puffed up with it; but there is a more excellent and ſafer kind of knowledge to be preſſed after, which is a knowledge of things by receiving of them. There is a knowledge of things by the Spirit's opening the words which ſpeak of them, or by inward immediate prophecies from the word of life in the heart. This is an excellent knowledge, and not to be found in the earthly part of man: yet the earthly part (when this knowledge is given) is very apt to be ſwelled and exalted with it; but then there is alſo a knowledge, which ariſeth from the gift of the thing itſelf. This knowledge is very precious, and much more full and certain than the other, having the nature and immediate power of life in itſelf, and ſo is perfectly able to preſerve. As for inſtance,

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to make it more plain: there may be a knowledge of juſtification, by the Spirit's opening the words written in ſcripture concerning juſtification, and the blood of ſprinkling; and this is a good knowledge, where there is a true opening of it from the Spirit: but then there is a knowledge by feeling of the blood of ſprinkling in the heart, and by ſeeing with the new eye the way of its juſtification; and in this knowledge is the power and the cleanſing of the life received, which in the other was but ſpoken of. Therefore reſt not in opening of prophecies, or true meanings of theſe things (though this kind of knowledge is very excellent, and hath been very rare), but wait to feel the thing itſelf which the words ſpeak of, and to be united by the living Spirit to that, and then thou haſt a knowledge from the nature of the thing itſelf; and this is more deep and inward than all the knowledge that can be had from words concerning the thing.

5. When thou feeleſt things, then ſeek their preſervation in the proper ſpring of their own life. Let the root bear thee, and all thy knowledge, with all that is freely given thee of God. When thou feeleſt thyſelf leavened with the life, and become a branch ſhot out of the life, then learn how to abide in the life, and to keep all that is given thee there; and have nothing which thou mayeſt call thine own any more; but to be loſt in thyſelf, and found in him. Know the land of the living, wherein all the things of life live, and can live no-where elſe.

Now in all this, in this whole courſe, from the very firſt ſtep of it, there is certainty, there is ſtability, there is infallibility. From the very firſt opening of the true key, I begin to learn ſomewhat of God; and to learn certainly, and feel an aſſurance and eſtabliſhment in it: and growing up here, I grow up in the true learning, and in the true ſettlement, and ſo I am not unlearned and unſtable, wreſting the ſcriptures to my own deſtruction: for I take none of the knowledge of the ſcriptures from myſelf, from my own underſtanding,

ſtanding, from my own ſtudy and invention, or from the ſtudies of other expoſitors, but from a certain hand. And how can he wreſt ſcripture, who is kept ſingle, and has no deſire to have any thing to be the meaning of it, but what is the meaning; nor no will to know the meaning, further than the good-will of him whoſe Spirit penned it thinks good to give forth the meaning to him; and who waits to receive this, not to feed the luſtful knowing part in himſelf, but to feed the life with it? And when the life hath no uſe for it, he is content to have it ſhut up, and to be without it: I ſay, how is it poſſible for this man to wreſt ſcriptures? But now a man that hath taken in a body of knowledge already, he goes to the ſcripture, and bends it, to make it ſpeak anſwerable to that; and where it ſpeaks contrary, he invents a way to make it comply, and ſo wreſts ſcriptures forward and backward, to make them ſpeak agreeable to what he has already received and believed. Thus every ſort of perſons, Papiſts and Proteſtants, bend the ſcriptures, to make them ſpeak conformable to their opinions and practices; not having *the true learning*, which gives to read them in the true original, where the knowledge of what they ſpeak and mean is certain: and ſo they are alſo *unſtable*, and ſubject to be ſhaken by a wind of reaſon which is ſtronger than their own. And this wreſting of ſcripture is *to their own deſtruction*; for that part which is ſo much as deſirous to bend a ſcripture, is to be deſtroyed; and that part cannot receive the true knowledge; but ſtumbles in its own wiſdom and way of ſeeking, at the wiſdom of God, and at the true way of finding.

But the foregoing counſel, faithfully hearkened unto, will preſerve out of this, and alſo bring to the true means, and to the true uſe of the means, which all nations, who have drunk of the whore's cup, have erred concerning, and taken the falſe for the true. The ſtrength of this wine hath made all nations, people, tongues, and languages, to miſtake; who, in the heat of their drink, have cried up the means, the means, the ordinances, the ordinances, &c. not perceiving.

ceiving how this heat came from the ſpirits of the whore's wine, and not from the ſober, meek, calm, gentle leadings of the Spirit of Chriſt; and ſo, in a fleſhly zeal, have ſet up the whore's means, inſtead of the Lamb's means, and contend for them with the whore's ſpirit and weapons. Now it is impoſſible for any man ſo much as to know the true means till the whore's wine be purged out of him; for that will make him err in judgment, and take the falſe for the true. And which way ſhall he ever come to the kingdom, who has lighted upon the wrong means? Or how ſhall he ever come to the true means, who never yet ſaw the witchery of the whoriſh ſpirit from the life, and how he himſelf hath been bewitched and cozened with the falſe, inſtead of the true? As for inſtance:

Prayer; that is generally taken for a means: "Aſk, "and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; "knock, and it ſhall be opened to you. If parents, "which are evil, know how to give good gifts to their "children; how much more ſhall the heavenly Father "give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?" This therefore is an undoubted thing, that prayer is a means.

Anſ. True; there is a prayer which is a means, and there is a prayer which is not a means. There is a prayer which is an ordinance, and there is a prayer which is an invention. There is a prayer which is the breath of the true child, and there is a prayer which is the breath of the fleſhly part, a breath of the whoriſh ſpirit. There is a prayer of the firſt birth, and there is a prayer of the ſecond birth; both which cry and weep to God for the ſame thing. Now the one of theſe is the true means, the other not: one of them is Chriſt's ordinance, the other is antichriſt's ordinance. Now the queſtion is, which of theſe thy prayer is? Whether it be thine own breath, or God's breath? Whether it come from the renewings of the Spirit of life, or from thine own natural part painted? For accordingly it is either the true means, or the falſe means. If it be the true means, it ſhall have the thing; the Spirit

Spirit, the life, the kingdom it prays for: if it be the falſe means, it can never obtain it. Papiſts, they pray; Proteſtants, they pray; ſome in forms, ſome without forms; ſome meditating before-hand, ſome not meditating. Are all theſe the true means; or are any of them the true means? The birth of the true child is the only true prayer; and he prays only in the moving and in the leading of that Spirit that begat him: and this is a prayer according to the will, in the life, and from the power. But all mens prayers, according to times they ſet to themſelves, or according to formings of deſires in their own minds, which they offer up to God with the nature and heart that ſinneth againſt him, theſe are falſe means, and may ſatisfy the drunken ſpirit erred from the life, but are no means to the truth.

Canſt thou pray? How cameſt thou to learn to pray? Waſt thou taught from above? Or didſt thou gain the ſkill and ability by the exerciſe and improvement of thine own natural part? Didſt thou begin with ſighs and groans, ſtaying there till the ſame Spirit that taught thee to groan, taught thee alſo to ſpeak? Waſt thou ever able to diſtinguiſh the ſighs and groans of the Spirit's begetting, from the ſighs and groans of thy own natural and affectionate part? And hath that part, with all its ſighings, groanings, deſires, endeavours, &c. been thruſt aſide, and the ſeed immortal raiſed by the Spirit of eternal life, which teacheth to cry and mourn, and at length to ſpeak to the Father for the preſervation and nouriſhment of his life? If it hath been thus with thee, then thou haſt known that prayer which is the true means; but if otherwiſe, though thou pray ever ſo long, and with ever ſo great affections, and ſtrong deſires, this is all but the falſe means, with its falſe warmth, from the falſe fire; this is but the means which the whoriſh ſpirit (which is not in union with the life and power, but keeps the ſeed in bondage) has ſet up inſtead of the true means. And this can never lead to truth, but keeps alive God's enemy under this pleaſant covering. Neither is this the worſhip of

the

the living God: but as it is from another ſpirit, ſo it is to another ſpirit.

Oh learn to be ſober! come out of this drunken fury, and conſider things mildly and ſeriouſly. Do not make a great outcry of ordinances, ordinances! the means, the means! This is the voice of the clamorous woman, who with her loud noiſe would fain keep you from liſtening after the ſtill voice of true wiſdom, which cannot be heard in the midſt of this great noiſe and hurry in your ſpirits; but conſider which are the true ordinances, which are the true means; which are the likeneſſes man has framed, and which is the true thing itſelf. And if ye could once be mild, gentle, and calm, and turn from your own wiſdom and fleſhly knowledge of things, it might pleaſe God to remove your ſtumbling-blocks, and to open that eye in you which can ſee the antichriſtian nature, and diſcern between the coverings which it hath formed to hide its deceitful ſpirit under, and the true garment and clothing of life. But the ſeed of the kingdom is little, and ye are great; how can ye enter into it? The pearl lies hid in the field, and ye are gazing up to heaven; how can ye ſee it? Chriſt is deſcended into the lower parts of the earth, and ye are uſing means to aſcend upwards in the wrong nature; how can ye meet with him? The goſpel hath been hid; the ſun hath not ſhined; it hath been night, and ye have got many falſe candles; which way can ye acknowledge the little glimmering of the day-ſtar, who have ſuch ſatisfaction in the warmth of your falſe fires? Ye are far from the true light, who have not yet received ſo much of it as to diſcover the darkneſs of the night. Ye are too high, too wiſe, too knowing for Chriſt, or for the ſight and acknowledgment of the true means which lead to life. And if ye could once come to ſee this, there might be ſome hope; but in that wiſdom wherein your life and knowledge ſtand, ye are ſhut out; and ye are reaſoning and ſtumbling at the ſtone; while others (who are broken in ſpirit, and in meekneſs and humility led to try) find it a ſure foundation, even a

foundation of eternal life, for the true ſeed of life; and are built into the living city, which is made without hands, and without any of the tools of man's wiſdom.

A Brief HISTORY of the STATE of the CHURCH ſince the Days of the APOSTLES, with the living Seal to it; which he that hath eternal Life abiding in him, can read and witneſs; but that Wiſdom, Zeal, and Devotion, which is in the Death cannot.

AFTER the univerſal degeneration and corruption of the Jewiſh ſtate, and the putting an end to the ſhadows thereof, by the appearance and ſucceſſion of the ſubſtance, it pleaſed God to diſſolve that people, ſtate, and policy; and by the power of his life (without either the wiſdom or ſtrength of man) to ſet upon the heatheniſh world, which he ſubdued and brought under the power of his life. By his apoſtles and meſſengers, who preached the everlaſting goſpel, the word of eternal life, he gathered aſſemblies up and down the nations, whom the nations by all their perſecutions could not ſubject; but they reigned over them in the power, authority, and dominion of God: for they were kings and prieſts to God in the ſight of all the nations, and they did reign upon the earth: inſomuch as the heatheniſh ſpirit of man obſerving their order in the Spirit, and the wiſdom and power of the Spirit among them, who by his living light was able to ſearch the hearts of thoſe who came to obſerve them, could not but acknowledge that God was in them of a truth.

Now the next thing to be expected, is Satan's oppoſition againſt this power of life, and his ſtratagems to undermine it. He withſtood the growth and ſettlement of the church all that he could by open force,

making uſe both of the heatheniſh devout worſhippers, who fought for their Jupiter, their Diana, and other gods and goddeſſes; and of the Jewiſh devout worſhippers, who fought for their temple-worſhip, with the laws and ordinances of Moſes, which were now expired. But neither of theſe would do; but the church in the power of life gained ground upon him, and did rather thrive and increaſe, than diminiſh by this oppoſition. Therefore now he falls to his ſtratagems; he gets ſome falſe brethren out of the church (*they went out from us*); theſe he clothes as angels of light, puts the ſheeps clothing on their wolviſh nature, makes them appear as like the apoſtles as may be, endues them with an excellent taking knowledge of life and ſpirituality in appearance; forms in them an image of the Truth, and inſpires this image with the ſpirit of his own life; and with theſe he goes forth into the world, and gathers the world about him. Now the world was preſently taken with this (*the world went after him*); for this is that the world would have, an appearance of religion, an image of Truth, but their own ſpirit in it. The worldly ſpirit, that flies off from the life, from the power, can readily cloſe with this, becauſe it is its own. Bring forth ever ſo high notions of religion and ſpiritual wiſdom, the world will hug them, the world will feed on them, the world will clothe itſelf with them. The world can ſwallow and digeſt any thing but life; any pleaſant picture of things in heaven will down with the world; but the nature, the life, the Truth, the Spirit, Chriſt in his true and living croſs, this will not down with the world.

Now the devil having thus ſet up his falſe image in the world, and gathered a party after him, then he ſets upon the church, and the battle goeth very hard, life ſtriving to defend, and death to overcome. How hard did the apoſtles ſtrive in their day to keep their converts to the ſimplicity of Truth, and to the way thereof (which even then began to be evil ſpoken of); writing epiſtles to the churches, warning them of the falſe apoſtles, and wiſhing them to ſtand their ground!

ground! Yea, Chriſt himſelf writes ſeveral epiſtles from heaven to ſome of them, checking their backſlidings, and encouraging them to renew their zeal and ſtrength, putting them in mind of the crown which attended the victory. But at length the devil with his ſtratagems prevails, gets the poſſeſſion of the church's territories, and the church is fain to fly for her preſervation; and ſuch of her ſeed as are left behind her, the enemy makes war againſt, ſlays, and drinks their blood.

Now here is an end of all the glory of that ſtate: now the devil hath gained the world again: the ſame ſpirit that loſt it under the heatheniſh power (for there he was conquered) recovers it under an antichriſtian appearance, ſetting up the ſame wickedneſs, and the ſame courſe and current of death, under forms of antichriſtian religion, as he had done before under forms of heatheniſh devotion.

Thus the devil being conqueror, having gained the field, he divides the ſpoils among his army: he takes whatever was the church's, and makes his own, and ranks them in his way of antichriſtian religion and devotion; ſo that henceforward thoſe things which were once Chriſt's and the church's, are now all his, and diſtributed by him among his followers. He gives the name church to the whore which he ſets up; he gives the name Chriſtian to his diſciples; he preſcribes baptiſm and the ſupper (which he calls ſacraments) and praying, and preaching, and ſinging, which he calls publick ordinances; and he preſcribes private duties and exerciſes of devotion; and he gets the letter of the ſcriptures, and forms multitudes of meanings and expoſitions, and has lying ſigns and wonders for ſuch as need them, that he might keep all the ſeveral brigades of his army quite under his pay, and might have ſome pleaſing wares of traffick for every ſort of his merchants in his Babylon. For this is the city of that king, which he built after his conqueſt over the life, and which he hath enriched with the ſpoils from the life. And here all his ſubjects ſhall have content;

they ſhall have what they will, if they will but be faithful to him in the main. Call for what likeneſs, what invention, what appearance of truth they will, they ſhall have it, ſo that they will but be content without life. No notion about the Spirit will he deny them, ſo they will be content with the notion, without the preſence of the living Spirit. They ſhall have light in their underſtandings, warmth in their affections, joy, peace, hope, comfort out of the ſcriptures. They ſhall apply as many promiſes to themſelves as they will, have what they will, do what they will, ſo they keep out of the feeling of the living principle; but if once that ſtir, and there be any hearkening after that, then he begins to ſhew his tyranny, on the one hand, to force them back; and his ſtratagems, on the other hand, to tempt them aſide from it.

The devil having thus gained the form, and enriched himſelf with the church's ſpoils, and ſlain them which had the living teſtimony, then he falls to corrupting the form: for that filthy ſpirit, though he can clothe himſelf with the form to deceive from the life, and abide there to keep down the life; yet he does not much love it; he loves his own form better: and when he is out of fear and aſſaults from the life, then he returns to his own form again, or patches up a garment more ſuitable to his own nature, taking in ſomewhat of the other with it, to make his own paſs the better; for if he ſhould have returned to the direct heatheniſh forms of idolatry and falſe worſhip, he could not ſo have lain hid; therefore he makes a mixture of ſomewhat which was preſcribed to the Jews, with ſome things found practiſed among the Chriſtians. Thus he brought in inventions of croſſes, and images, and beads, and pictures, and reliques, and ceremonies beyond number: inſomuch as not only the life and power was loſt, but the true likeneſs alſo; even ſo loſt, that it is impoſſible for all the wiſdom of man to recover the knowledge of the likeneſs again. Men have ſtriven much; but they never could form a true likeneſs of the primitive church, and the way thereof.

Now

Now though it is the desire of the devil to keep men in the grossness of darkness; yet, rather than lose them, he will let them have some part of the form again: nay, he will tempt them with a gaudy appearance of the form, to keep them from meeting with the power and life, when he perceives true secret inward stirrings in them, which will not be quieted without somewhat. Thus, when there was a stirring against Popery, he tempted aside into Episcopacy: when that would hold no longer, then to Presbytery: when that will not serve, into Independency: when that will not keep quiet, but still there are searchings further, into Anabaptism: if that will not do, into a way of Seeking and Waiting: if this will not satisfy, they shall have high notions, yea, most pleasant notions concerning the Spirit, and concerning the life, if they will but be satisfied without the life: yea, they shall have all the liberty in the creatures they can desire (the best-painted liberty), if they will but be satisfied without that liberty which stands not in the creatures out of the life, but over the creatures in the life. And he that turns aside to any of these, he is still under the dominion of that spirit; and there he holds knowledge, and there he performs his worship, and there he has his unity, his liberty, his life, his rest, his peace, his joy, his hope. Now no man can worship God, till he comes out of every part of this Babylon, and his feet touch Sion; though there may be a secret panting, and an unknown safety, and an acceptation of the poor mourning soul in the passage. Yea, all sorts of people, here ye were accepted in your stirrings after life, in hearkening to the leadings of life from out of the Babylonish spirit; but your turning aside to the Babylonish wisdom in a new dress, and sitting down in a new form of her inventing, hath brought you to a loss of life, and hath made you hateful to the living God, who hath drawn his sword against you, and hath prepared his vials, his thunders, his plagues, his woes: and ye must drink of his cup with sorrow, as ye have drank of the whore's cup with pleasure.

Ye that have found a bed of pleaſure in any of your forms, or in any of your notions, and ſo have found eaſe in the whore's painting; ye muſt be caſt into the bed of ſorrow, and know the fire in God's Sion, and the furnace in his Jeruſalem; if ever ye become an habitation for God, or expect to feed on his holy mountain.

The condition of the church all this while (all this time of Satan's reign in forms of knowledge and worſhip) hath been very lamentable, and is expreſſed in ſcripture by parables and reſemblances of a ſad ſtate. She hath been as a city pulled down, like a ruined city, which needs rebuilding before ſhe can come to be a city again (*when the Lord ſhall build up Sion*). She hath been as a wilderneſs, barren, undreſſed, unregarded. She hath been like a mournful widow, whoſe huſband hath been rent from her, and her children ſlain. She hath loſt all her ornaments, all her garments, all her ordinances, all her appearances, and ways of life, inſomuch as *the ways of Sion mourn*. But Babylon, the mother of harlots, ſhe has got all the beauty, all the glory, all the church's attire, all the church's ordinances, and all the trade and traffick runs thither, and ſhe is cried up for the true church; and if any dare ſpeak a word againſt her, and for the true church indeed, they are exclaimed againſt for ſchiſmaticks and hereticks, and war prepared againſt them, and ſome or other of the beaſt's horns puſhing at them. Thus it has gone all the time of the apoſtaſy; the whore has flouriſhed with the name of the church, making great merchandize of ſouls, ſelling their formal ſtuff for money; and abundance of children hath the whore brought forth, and nouriſhed with her milk of deceit; but the true woman, the Lamb's wife, with her ſeed, and the living food from her living breaſts, have had no place on the earth.

But this ſtate of things is ended in part, and ending apace. The Lord God of life is ariſen out of his holy habitation to aſſault the dragon, to diſcover and ſtrip the whore, to recover a poſſeſſion for his life in

in the earth, to make room in the world for his church, which he is bringing out of the wilderneſs. The battle is begun; the territories of antichriſt are aſſaulted; the Lamb hath appeared on his white horſe, and hath gathered many of his called, faithful, and choſen about him; the enſign is lifted up; the light (which ſearcheth the inwards of the enemy's dominions) hath appeared, and his inmoſt power and wiſdom is not feared; but the Lord God is feared, and the dragon's arm withers, and the head of his policy (whereby he enſnared and entangled from the life) is cruſhing. Glory to the endleſs power of life, for ever and for ever!

Be wiſe now therefore, and loſe not your ſhare in the immortal crown. Take heed how ye be found fighters againſt the Lamb, in the wiſdom and power of Babylon, which is to fall. Painting will not paſs now: that blood of the Lamb is felt, which waſhes off the whore's paint; even all her painted notions of the blood of Chriſt, and of ſanctification and redemption, &c. the whoriſh nature being diſcovered underneath all theſe. Ye have got the name of church, the name of Chriſtians, the name of ordinances, &c. by the whore's help; but the nature of life ye want: and the living power is come to recover the name from you; and we, his living witneſſes, teſtify to your faces, that ye ſhall not enjoy it; but the name and the thing ſhall go together; and he that hath not the thing, ſhall alſo loſe the name. Yea, your eyes ſhall ſee that ye have been the ſacrilegious ones, who have ſtolen holy names and titles, which ye never received from the hand of God; but the whoriſh ſpirit (which is out of the life, and an enemy to the life) hath handed them to you. And this is told you in dear and tender love, that ye might not periſh, but have eternal life abiding in your hearts, and the new name written by the Spirit of life on your foreheads, which all that know the writing of the life, may be able to read and acknowledge.

There are ſeveral touches of theſe things in divers of the epiſtles of the apoſtles: but the full relation is given forth in that book of the Revelations, which was penned by the Spirit of God, to be read in the light of the Spirit, and ſo to be a preſervative againſt the over-ſpreading contagion of Antichriſtianiſm. And it is ſaid, at the entrance into it, "Bleſſed is he that read-"eth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, "and keep thoſe things which are written therein." But men having loſt the Spirit, have not been able to read it; and having loſt the right ear, they have not been able to hear the words it ſpeaks: and how then could they keep the things written therein? He that doth not underſtand what he is warned againſt, how is it likely he ſhould be preſerved by the warning? The Spirit of God judged this warning neceſſary, but the ſpirit of deceit cries, it is a deep thing, not to be meddled with. Now this is a plain demonſtration, that men generally are overtaken with the whoredom, and drink of the whore's cup, and ſubmit themſelves to the beaſt, and exalt his horns, and receive his mark, and ſome or other of his names; becauſe they have not the knowledge of that which diſcovers theſe things, and was given by the Spirit of God to forewarn, and ſo to preſerve out of them. He that knoweth not the myſtery of iniquity working under a form of godlineſs, may not he eaſily be deceived with the myſtery of iniquity? He that knoweth not what is become of the true church and miniſtry, and where to look for them, may not he eaſily own a falſe church and miniſtry? He that knoweth not the Spirit of the ſcriptures, which the church carried with her, when ſhe left the letter behind her, may not he eaſily ſet up the letter for his rule? He that knoweth not the living mark and name of a Chriſtian, with which the Spirit of life ſeals all the lambs of Chriſt in the life, may not he eaſily give this name to himſelf, and to others who have not this mark, but the beaſt's mark? He that knoweth not the true faith, the true love, the true hope, the true joy, the true peace, the true reſt, the true conſolation in Chriſt

Chriſt the life (the true meekneſs and patience of the ſaints, &c.) may not he eaſily ſet up ſhadows or likeneſſes of theſe (which he gathers from the letter of the ſcriptures and the promiſes thereof, receiving the knowledge of them into the wrong part, and applying them to the wrong thing) inſtead of theſe? Ah, poor hearts! the book of the Revelation is eaſy to that Spirit that wrote it: and it was not given forth to be laid by as uſeleſs; but to be ſerviceable in the hand of the Spirit, for the ages after the days of the apoſtles; and in the true light it is eaſily read: and they that can read it, can ſee that in it, which they that cannot read it, cannot believe. And this is plainly ſeen; that there is but the Spirit of truth, and the ſpirit of deceit: but the Lamb's wife, and the whore (which hath whored from the Spirit, which hath made uſe of the letter, to run a whoring from that Spirit that wrote it): that there is but the true church and the falſe church; but life and death; but form and power; but Chriſt the myſtery of godlineſs, and antichriſt the myſtery of iniquity; but God and the dragon; God in the church or temple in the wilderneſs, and the dragon in the world's churches and temples, appearing there as if he were God, giving forth laws and ordinances like God; and all the world falls down before him, and worſhips him as if he were God; and hopes by this worſhip which they perform to him, and by their faith and hope which they receive from him, to be ſaved at laſt. I ſay there are but theſe two: and he that is joined to the one of theſe, is not joined to the other. Let him that readeth underſtand; which he may eaſily do by the wiſdom of the Spirit, but never can by the wiſdom of the letter. For though we know how to join theſe two in the life, yet there is a neceſſity of ſeparating them at preſent, till the letter be gained out of the hands of the whoriſh ſpirit, which hath built up ſeveral forms of knowledge, religion, and worſhip in Myſtery Babylon, by the letter without the life; all which muſt fall with Babylon.

An

An EXHORTATION,

Relating to the Workings of the Myſtery of INIQUITY, and the Myſtery of GODLINESS in this preſent AGE.

ALL people upon earth who love your ſouls, and have any true ſecret pantings after God, look to the nature of your ſpirits, and look to the nature of thoſe things ye let into your minds; leſt ye take death for life, error for truth, and ſo ſow to yourſelves corruption, and rear up a fabrick in Myſtery Babylon, which will be turned into deſolation and utter ruins, by the power of life from Sion.

Strong is the ſpirit of deceit that is entered into the world, and glorious and very taking are his images and likeneſſes of truth; which will deceive all but the very Elect, who were choſen from the foundation of the world, and whoſe eyes are open to ſee the foundation of life, which was before the foundation of the world.

It hath been an heavy dull time for many ages: there have only been witneſſes hitherto raiſed againſt antichriſt, and he hath found it an eaſy matter to knock them down, and keep up his ways of profaneneſs, and of formal ſuperſtitious kinds of devotion, up and down all the nations. But now it is a quick time; the Spirit of the Lord God hath ariſen, the ſearching eye is opened, the purſuit after the very ſpirit of antichriſt is begun; yea, very quick and freſh is the ſcent of that Spirit which hunteth the whore; and now ſhe goes forward and backward, traverſes her ground, changes her paint and colours often, ſhifts her garment continually, and uſes all the art ſhe can to ſave her life. Now the king of Babylon opens his treaſury, brings forth all his likeneſſes, all his images, all

all appearances; with ſome or other of them (if it be poſſible) to tempt the ſimple ſoul, and keep it ſatisfied therewith, in ſome of his chambers of darkneſs and imagery, out of the life and power.

Therefore now be warned and look about you, and be not cozened with any of the wares of Babylon, where the merchandize and traffick is for ſouls, and where all the wares of deceit are, which are proper to cozen ſouls: but ſeek for the nature of that thing, which the inward pantings of your heart at any time have been after; and wait for the opening of that eye, which can ſee, through all manner of paint, to that nature; and keep low in the life, ſimple and honeſt-hearted, and then gaudy appearances will not take with you; for they are only temptations to the aſpiring part, which is lifted up above the pure, low, humble principle: and if that part were brought down, ye would be ſafe; but while that ſtands, ye will not be out of the danger of temptations. Now this know;

There is nothing whereof Sion is built, but the likeneſs of it is in Babylon; and the likeneſs is very taking, even more taking to that eye which is open in men, than the truth itſelf. The truth is a plain ſimple thing; it is not gaudy in appearance; its excellency lies in its nature: but the appearances of truth, which Satan paints, are very gaudy, very glorious, ſeemingly very ſpiritual, very pure, very precious, very ſweet; they many times even raviſh that underſtanding, and thoſe affections that are out of the life. Oh! what ſhall I ſay! Shall I ſpeak a little of the wares of Babylon? Where is there an ear which can hear me? Yet he that opens my mouth, can open thine ear: therefore let me ſpeak a little plainly.

1. There are many glorious falſe births in Babylon. There is no inheriting the kingdom, but by being born again. This doctrine the king of Babylon preacheth; he is fain to do ſo, elſe the letter of the ſcripture would overthrow his kingdom. Now, therefore, to keep from the true new-birth, he hath his images of the new-birth, his ſeveral falſe-births.

A great

A great while outward baptism, and a formal knowledge, was enough to make a man a Christian; but now, since that is discovered, and will not do, he brings forth better births; he hath inward changes of the mind (multitudes of them) fit for every one who is seeking after the life, to be tempted from the life with; and he tempts every one with a proper bait, with that which is taking to him in his present estate. What changes any kind of knowledge by virtue of the notion (with the devil's quickening power added to it) can produce in any man, the devil can transform man into. Yea, many are these changes; and he that doth not know the nature of the true birth, may easily be deceived with that, which is just like the thing he looks for. A man looks for a new birth, for an inward change: he looks for a knowledge to change him; he shall have just the very likeness of that which his heart desires, the lively likeness; the devil is ready at hand to furnish him with it: which way can the man, who never saw the true thing, espy the cheat?

2. There are many glorious desires in Babylon, many pantings, many breathings after that which this birth of Babylon takes to be life. The devil hath these wares, these images in his shop too; as he hath a false birth in imitation of the true, so he hath false breathings for his false birth. If his child could not seemingly breathe towards God (as if he were a natural child of God) he would soon be detected; therefore he inflames him with desires of growth, with desires of enjoyment, of that which he calls life, with seeming desires of serving and glorifying God; and here come in the prayers of the fleshly birth, which are many times carried on with exceeding great earnestness of the fleshly part, to which also the father of this birth gives answers. And now which way can deceit be so much as suspected here? And yet here also the deceiver lodgeth, and herein he worketh, raising strong desires in that part wherein he dwells, that he may allay those pure desires, which otherwise would be arising from the life underneath, and which (notwithstanding all this) sometimes

ſometimes do ariſe, eſpecially when the ſoul is in anguiſh.

3. There is falſe food in Babylon, falſe knowledge to feed this wrong nature with; there is *knowledge, falſely ſo called.* There are ſeveral appearances of all the truths in Sion. There is outward knowledge of the letter, and there is inward myſtical knowledge; and each of theſe have their warmth, and their freſhneſs, and do nouriſh up this child, and cauſe it to grow. Yea, what knowledge and experience (which at firſt ſprang from the true life) this ſpirit makes a prey of, and daily brings into his Babylon, therewith to feed and fatten that which is born of him, and to cover the old deceitful nature under, which is not ſlain thereby, but daily lives, and moves, and puts forth itſelf; this is certainly felt by that which is made ſenſible in the life, but hard to be ſpoken, becauſe the deceived heart is ſo groſs, and the ear ſo heavy. Now here the painted whore, which hath dealt treacherouſly with the life, ſits as a queen, and ſays ſhe ſhall ſee no ſorrow: this knowledge is certain to her, theſe experiences ſhe hath had the feeling of, and knows they can never be ſhaken. But O thou princeſs of Babylon! the Lord will ſtrip thee, the Lord will unbare thy inwards, and thine own eyes ſhall ſee thy nakedneſs, which ſhall be for a perpetual reproach among all the inhabitants of Sion: and then thy dark deceitful ſpirit ſhall have no more to ſay againſt thoſe, who now ſee through thy covering, to thy nature, in the light; and judge thee, not of themſelves, nor in their own wills and underſtandings, but from the true power, and in the true guidance of the life, whoſe work it is to purſue, overtake, and judge death, even to death. For all this knowledge, all theſe experiences in thee (though thou ſeeſt it not, nor canſt ſee it with that eye wherewith thou lookeſt to ſee), are held captive by that which tranſgreſſed, and hath erred from the life, and are made uſe of to keep thy ſoul in bands: and as they are thus held, death and the curſe muſt overtake them, ere that life in thee, from which they firſt ſprang, can poſſibly ariſe.

ariſe. Graft not after the knowledge of this in the underſtanding part, but wait for the ſenſe of it from that life which lies ſlain underneath theſe, and by that part which exalts theſe.

4. There are falſe keys to open the ſeveral chambers of imagery in Babylon. This food man cannot gather of himſelf, it muſt be given to him: this knowledge man cannot get into by himſelf, but as this ſpirit leads him, and opens to him; for he hath the keys of death, and opens into the treaſures of death. Now this hugely confirms a man in the deceit, without the leaſt ſuſpicion of it. Why, ſaith he, I had not this knowledge from myſelf, I came not to it by mine own ſkill or underſtanding, but it was given me, it was opened to me; and it came in freſh, and warmed in my heart, begetting ſweet and pure deſires in me, and hath made me eye the glory of God, and not myſelf. Yea, it might come thus in the likeneſs, and work the likeneſs of this in thee; and yet itſelf not be truth, nor be able to work the truth of this in thee; and this is proper to deceive thy very heart, and make thee a pleaſant inhabitant of Babylon, and a joyful worſhipper of the king thereof, whom, through this deep deceit, and moſt ſubtil falſe appearance in thy heart, thou miſtakeſt for the King of Sion.

5. This falſe ſpirit hath his falſe croſſes, his falſe combats and fightings. The very Papiſts have not only their wooden and ſtone croſſes, but they have alſo their ways of ſelf-denial, their ways of croſſing the natural part, of reſignation to the Divine Will (as they call it), of fighting againſt corruption, &c. It is manifeſt that a man muſt deny himſelf, or elſe he cannot be a Chriſtian (his own will muſt not, cannot live, if he truly give himſelf up to Chriſt): therefore that ſpirit, which lieth lurking to deceive, hath ſeveral ways of ſelf-denial to teach (all which muſt have ſome hardneſs in them to the natural part, or elſe they could not paſs); and theſe may produce great and conſtant conflicting in the fleſh, and yet the fleſhly nature be ſtill kept alive under all theſe conflicts

conflicts and exercises of self-denial. He hath a circumcising-knife, which cuts off a great deal, but always spares the nature; and as long as the nature is spared, the devil still hath that wherein he can dwell.

6. He hath his false love to God and man, and his false zeal for God. Love and zeal are two distinguishing things. All men conclude that love determines a man to be a Christian, and so they take up some appearance or other of love; somewhat that satisfies themselves that their love is right, both to God and man. The very Papists, who are full of blood and cruelty, yet pretend to love; they have an image of love which contents them. But there are far higher images, even images of universal love and sweetness, which no eye can perceive, but that which knows the truth. And take one word from me, ye to whom it belongs: all ye that cry up universal love from the sweet sense of its image, ye shall one day know, that one act of particular love from the true nature, exceeds this in its utmost extent.

7. He hath his false life. The devil hath not only a dead formal religion, but he hath a resemblance, an imitation of the quickenings of the spirit. The devil puts his life into his image, where need requires. He hath not only a dead literal knowledge, but he hath paintings of the life; he draws a thing to the life; he makes his dead image of truth as like the living substance of truth as possibly he can; insomuch as his images of life, at a distance, without being beheld in the true life, cannot but be taken for living. Now here is the depth of deceit, when the devil's images of life in the heart are taken for the living thing, for the life itself.

8. He hath his false liberty. There is a glorious liberty in the Gospel: there is a perfect freedom in the service of the life; there is a liberty in the power of the life over all the creatures. God made all things for man, and he denies him nothing; he being in subjection to him in the life, and using all in the dominion of the life. Now the devil paints a liberty like

like this; yea, a liberty that ſeems greater than this, even a liberty wherein the fleſhly part (whoſe very nature is eternally ſhut out of the nature of true liberty) hath ſcope; which liberty is not ſurrounded, nor cannot be ſurrounded by the power of life, as this is; and in this painted liberty, that ſpirit which painted it lives; which paint the true liberty takes off, ſlaying that which calls it liberty, and gathering in the name of liberty from this falſe appearance, to that which is liberty indeed. And by the way, he that can read this, let him. The perfection of the true liberty lies in the perfection of bonds, in the perfect binding down of that which is out of the life; for the true liberty is the liberty of the life, and of nothing elſe; and when all that is contrary to the life is perfectly bound down, then the life hath its full ſcope, without the leaſt controul of the fleſhly part; and when the life lives, then that which is joined to the life lives alſo.

Now here is the myſtery of iniquity; here is the inward kingdom of darkneſs; here is the glory of Babylon! Here is he that contends for the kingdom, for the inheritance! Here the ſon of the bond-woman (thus dreſſed, thus furniſhed, thus filled within and without) will have it go for granted that he is the right heir: and yet all this while wants the nature of that which is to inherit, and cannot poſſibly receive that nature into himſelf, but only ſuch images aforementioned. And if, in tender love to his ſoul, from a clear ſight of this thing, we warn him, and bid him look about, he cries, Do not judge. He really thinks he is right in the main, and he ſeems willing to refer it to the day of trial. Ah, poor heart! the eye is opened which can ſee; that which hath judged the deceit in us, can alſo judge the deceit in thee. Cannot the ſpiritual eye ſee things in its kind? To what end hath God given it? Canſt thou ſee and judge natural things in the natural part? So can they ſee and judge ſpiritual things who are in the light, and who live in the life; yea, we ſhall continue judging thee in the fear,

fear, and in the humility, till God open that in thee, which can ſeal to our judgment.

Object. *How difficult do you make the way to life, if not utterly impoſſible? If all this be true, Who can be ſaved?*

Anſw. The way to life is very difficult; yea, and impoſſible to that part in man, which is ſo buſy in willing and running towards life; but it is as eaſy on the other hand, to that which the Father begetteth, raiſeth up, and leadeth. "The wayfaring man (though "a fool) ſhall not err." The wiſeſt and richeſt merchants in Babylon cannot ſet one ſtep in it; the leaſt child in Sion cannot err there. Therefore know that in thyſelf to which it is ſo hard; and know that which God hath given to thee, which will make it eaſy.

Thou haſt a living talent given thee by God; let not thine eye be drawn from that; but join to that, keep there, and thou art ſafe; and that will open thine eye to ſee all deceits, juſt in the very ſeaſon and hour of temptation. For thou muſt expect to meet with all theſe temptations, as thy growth makes thee capable of receiving them. And as they come, the true eye being kept open, they will be ſeen; and being ſeen they will eaſily be avoided in the power of life; for in vain the net is ſpread in ſight of the bird. Therefore that thou mayſt be ſafe;

1. Know the light, the eternal light of life, the little glimmerings and ſhinings of it in thy ſoul. This comes from the rock, to lead thee to the rock: and if thou wilt follow it, it will fix thee upon the rock where thou canſt not be ſhaken.

2. Keep in the light, keep within the hedge, ſtep not out of thine own; keep out of the circumference of the ſpirit of deceit; the power of whoſe witchery and ſorcery extends all over the regions of darkneſs.

3. Love ſimplicity, love the nakedneſs of life, ſtand ſingle in the honeſty of the heart, out of the intricate ſubtil reaſonings, and wiſe conſultings about things; for by theſe means the ſerpent comes to twine about and deceive thy ſoul; but in the ſimplicity of

the movings of life, in the light lies the power, the ſtrength, the ſafety.

4. Lie very low continually, even at the foot of the loweſt breathing and appearances of the light. Take heed of being above that wherein the life lies; for the wiſdom, the power, the ſtrength, yea, the great glory lies in the humility; and thou muſt never be exalted, thou muſt never come out of the humility, but find and enjoy the honour and glory of the life in the humility.

5. Mind the reproofs of the light; for that will ſtill be ſetting thee to rights. That will ſtill be bringing down that which would get up above; and there lies the preſervation. Oh the chaſtenings of the light, the ſweet chaſtenings of the love by the light! Theſe are healing ſtripes. This brings down the exalter, and that in thee which loves to be exalted, and to be ſeeking the honour of the ſpiritual riches, before the humility is perfected.

Thus, in love to ſouls, have I poured out my ſoul before the Lord, and held forth gentle leadings, even to the moſt ſtubborn and ſtiff-necked.

A BRIEF

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF SOME REASONS

(Amongſt many that might be given)

Why thoſe People called QUAKERS cannot do ſome Things on the one hand, and forbear doing of ſome Things on the other hand; for which they have ſuffered, and do ſtill ſuffer, ſo much Violence from the People, and ſuch ſore Perſecution from the Teachers and Magiſtrates of theſe Nations. Whereby it may appear to all, who are willing to take any fair Conſideration of their Cauſe, that their Sufferings are for Righteouſneſs Sake, becauſe of the Integrity of their Hearts towards GOD, and void of any juſt Ground of Offence towards Man.

This account was drawn up thus brief, for their ſakes who want either time or patience to conſider of it more at large; and anſwers to the heads of their ſufferings, in a particular declaration to the PARLIAMENT.

1. *WHY we go into meeting-places, or markets, or other-where, to teſtify to the truth, and againſt deceit.*

Reaſon. Becauſe we are moved of the Lord ſo to do. We are his; and where he bids us witneſs for him, and againſt deceivers and their deceit, we muſt do it: woe unto us (from the Lord) if we do it not. If any man do any ſuch thing in his own will, we witneſs againſt him, and the Lord will require it of him. Now this is no more than the apoſtles and ſervants of the Lord have done, as it is recorded in ſcripture.

2. *Why we cannot pay tithes.*

Reaſ. Becauſe tithes were not a maintenance appointed by Chriſt for his miniſters, but were ſet up by the Pope (as the maintenance of his miniſters) ſince the days of the apoſtles. And this maintenance by tithes, Wickliff and others bore a teſtimony againſt, and divers of the martyrs in queen Mary's days ſuffered for; as by the articles charged againſt them, and the teſtimony that they held forth, may appear.

3. *Why we meet together on the Firſt-days of the Week, and at other times.*

Reaſ. Becauſe we find the Lord drawing of us, and his preſence among us in our meetings, and receive refreſhings to our ſouls thereby.

4. *Why we cannot ſwear.*

Reaſ. Becauſe Chriſt our Lord (who is greater than Moſes, who gave the law about ſwearing) hath ſaid, "Swear not at all;" and his apoſtle (who abode in his doctrine) ſaith, "Above all things, my brethren, "ſwear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, "neither by any other oath." Now mark the drift of Chriſt, which is not only to forbid profane and unlawful oaths (for if that were all, Chriſt had ſpoken nothing further nor fuller than Moſes had done; which is contrary to all the inſtances of the like kind, whereby he ſtraitens all that had been ſaid by Moſes of old time), but all ſwearing, without exception, as may further appear by the inſtance immediately foregoing, in the caſe of divorce, where he expreſſeth an exception in theſe words, "Saving for the cauſe of forni-

"cation:"

" cation:" but here is no exception added by Chriſt; and the putting in of an exception by man's wiſdom, deſtroyeth Chriſt's words, making his command no ſtraiter than the law of Moſes, which forbad all profane and unlawful ſwearing, Levit. xix. 12.

5. *Why we cannot put off our hats to men.*

Reaſ. Becauſe it lifts up that in man which God will deſtroy. It is ſuitable to that nature which is of the earth, and feeds it. It is pleaſing to the fleſh; and that which is an enemy to the fleſh, cannot give it that which feeds and pleaſeth it. If we ſhould pleaſe men, we could not be the ſervants of Chriſt. This is the true ground whereupon we cannot do it; and not in contempt to authority, or any man's perſon. Neither can we reſpect mens perſons; for in ſo doing we ſhould commit ſin, as ſaith the apoſtle. And let men conſider what it is in them that cannot bear with it; it being done in ſimplicity of heart upon this account.

6. *Why we cannot juſtly be looked upon as vagrants or ſturdy beggars.*

Reaſ. Becauſe we beg not, nor paſs up and down in any idle way; but either about our civil employments and occaſions, or about the work of our God; nor are any way burthenſome to the nation. If to be from our dwellings about the work of our God, be accounted the breach of a law, would not the ſame law have taken hold on Chriſt and his apoſtles, if it had been in their days?

7. *Why we viſit friends in priſon.*

Reaſ. Becauſe they being impriſoned for their obedience to Chriſt, what we do to them, we do to him; and we are afraid, leſt he ſhould ſay to us at the great day; " I was ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me " not." Now they that are ſo far from doing this themſelves, that they puniſh others for doing it, when God ſhall call them to account, what will they anſwer?

8. *Why we cannot contribute towards the repairing of the ſteeple-houſes, or pay clerks wages.*

Reaſ. Becauſe they are places which were erected for *popiſh and idolatrous worſhip*; and where a worſhip not differing in its nature and ground (but only in form) is continued in this day; and the root from whence all this idolatry grew, is not ſo much as diſcovered, much leſs purged out of theſe dominions, by them who formerly declared againſt it in words. Now as we will anſwer it to God, we are to give no countenance or furtherance to idolatry. And for clerks, they were officers invented by the falſe church (ſince the apoſtaſy), never appointed by Chriſt in his church, and ſuch we dare not help to maintain. Was it not ſolemnly covenanted with the Lord againſt ſuperſtition, for the plucking up of epiſcopacy root and branch? And muſt not thoſe that are faithful to the Lord perform their covenant, though to their hurt?

Now any man that ſhall in the fear of the Lord read this, may ſee that theſe things bear a weight upon our hearts; and what we do herein, we do for conſcience-ſake, in obedience to the Lord; and not out of ſtubbornneſs, or rebellion (as by ſome we are charged), nor out of any delight that we have to diſturb or diſquiet others; but ſingly to the Lord, that we may ſtand clear in his ſight. We know whom we obey therein, and are ſure we do that which is pleaſing to him. Therefore let men take heed how they perſecute us, leſt they be found fighters againſt him who will be too ſtrong for them. For theſe many ages, ſince the days of the apoſtles, deceit hath got up, antichriſt hath ſat in the temple, the true worſhippers have been impriſoned and martyred. The Lord will avenge the ſufferings and blood of his ſaints, and in due time will plead their cauſe againſt the oppreſſors, on whom his hand will then fall heavy, and the rocks and the mountains ſhall not be able to hide them from the preſence of the Lamb; and that day who will be able to abide? Though now men put it far from them.

Some

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

Propoſed to the City of LONDON, and the Nation of ENGLAND, to calm their Spirits, and prepare them to wait for what the LORD is bringing about, that they may not run headily into their Ruin and Deſtruction; and, by this extraordinary Heat of their Spirits, kindle that Fire which will ſoon devour them.

With a ſhort Exhortation to them relating to their true Settlement, and the Removal of that which hinders it.

1. THE Lord God Almighty, who made heaven and earth; who upholds them by the word of his power; whoſe they are, with all their inhabitants; he ruleth in the kingdoms of men; eſtabliſhing or overturning laws, governments, and governors at his pleaſure, Pſal. lxxv. 5. &c. Dan. iv. 25, iii. 5.

2. That the Lord hath had an eſpecial hand in the ſhakings and changes of this nation; and hath ſome great things to bring about, which he ordereth all unto. And though many of the tranſactions and paſſages (as relating to men) have been very blamable; yet the Lord hath been juſt and good in them all; and can, in his own good time, recover the ground which he hath ſeemed to loſe, and advance both the good of his people, and of the nation, by all their ſufferings, loſſes, diſcouragements, and diſadvantages.

3. In this late revolution, there may be more of God than man is aware of. God, in his infinite wiſdom, might ſee that this parliament was not fit for work, and ſo might ſuffer ſuch a thing to fall out between them and the army (heightening their ſpirits on both ſides) as might occaſion the removal of them out of the way. Yea, and this preſent change may be but a paſſage to another, unleſs the Lord find theſe very faithful and diligent in his ſervice, and not minding themſelves and their own intereſts.

4. If this late revolution was of God, and he ſaw it good to bring it about, for the further carrying on of his work, he will be able to maintain it; and thoſe that oppoſe him therein ſhall not be able to ſtand before him. They may bring ruin upon the nation and themſelves; but they cannot ſet up what God throws down, nor raiſe up any thing elſe in the ſtead of it, according to their wills; but that which he, by his providence and diſpoſing hand, appointed to ſucceed, muſt have the time of trial which he allotteth it.

Therefore let men fear the Lord God, whoſe eye is upon us, and whoſe power is over us; and let us take heed of being found fighters againſt him. The cauſe hath long lain a bleeding; yet there is at length a true reviving of it: and thoſe whoſe hearts the Lord hath ſtirred up to ſeek it faithfully, the Lord will be with them, and he is ready to pardon their former miſcarriages. But oh! that they could lay themſelves low, and forget their own intereſts, that the cauſe might riſe up clear and manifeſt above them! Remember this ſaying, O ye great-ones! the Lord did not throw down the former greatneſs of the nobility for you to riſe up in their places; but ye ſhould have lain low, and remained little, and have let the Lord been great; and it is your true intereſt to deſcend and become little again. And if it were once manifeſt that ye did not ſeek yourſelves, but the cauſe of God, the good of his people, and of the nation, that every part and ſort of men might feel their oppreſſions broken, and their juſt rights and liberties recovered and preſerv-

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ed for them; this would draw the hearts of all the honeſt-hearted people to you as one man; and thoſe which have been ſcattered, would be again united; and our very enemies (ſeeing our integrity, and righteouſneſs, and true reformation by the wiſdom and guidance of God), would magnify that work of God, which, as yet, cannot but be a reproach.

Therefore, O England! fear before the Lord, and wait upon him: and let thine eye be taken off from man; for he is very vanity. Neither thy good nor thy harm ariſeth this way; but out of thine own bowels. What have all theſe afflictions done towards the refining thee? Art thou not yet what thou waſt? O England! wilt thou not be made clean? When ſhall it once be? Murmur not againſt the rods wherewith the Lord ſeeth good to chaſtiſe thee; but mourn over thy wickedneſs, thy pride, thy deceit, thy exceſs, thy cruelty, thy oppreſſion, thy falſe worſhip, and idolatries, &c. and over thy enmity againſt that which is of God, where-ever it appears.

At the beginning of theſe troubles thou couldſt bear with no form of worſhip, but thine own. Now thou art come thus far, that thou canſt almoſt bear with any form. Nay, but that will not ſerve; the Lord will have room for the power of godlineſs, and he will not always ſuffer thee to ſmite his ſervants for their obedience to his ſpirit. This is his controverſy with thee, and the cauſe of all thy miſery: when miſery, diſtreſs, and ruin have opened thine eyes, thou wilt ſee it. Oh! that thy day of calamity might paſs over thee! if thou couldſt indeed humble thyſelf before the Lord, and not walk any longer thus contrary to him, in the work which he is reſolved to bring about, the Lord might pity and ſpare thee; for he delighteth in mercy: but if thou continueſt to walk contrary to him, and wilt be ſettled afore his time, and in a way, and by ſuch means, as he approves not, the ſteps of his power againſt thee will overturn thee. Therefore fear, and be humble and meek before him; for therein lies the wiſdom which can preſerve thee: but ſtrive not

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to withſtand his foot-ſteps, leſt he trample down thy crown, thy ſtrength, thy hopes, thy peace, and all that is deſirable in thine eyes.

This is in tender love, as a gentle warning to you, that you may take heed of giving way to that fierce ſpirit, which is the fore-runner of miſery and deſolation;

From him who is a dear lover of this city, and of his native country,

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

Propoſed to the diſtracted Nation of ENGLAND, concerning the preſent Deſign and Work of GOD therein; upon their ſubmitting whereto doth their Settlement alone depend, and not upon any Form of Government, or Change of Governors, as that Spirit which ſeeketh their Ruin tempteth them to believe.

1. THAT God, in great mercy, broke the bonds of the Romiſh yoke, which lay hard upon the neck of this nation, and was very weighty upon thoſe conſciences wherein the true reforming light did ariſe in any meaſure; and who were in any meaſure true to that light which the Lord cauſed to break in upon them.

2. That

2. That the reformation out of Popery was not presently perfected (nay, was never yet perfected), but was very weak and low, many things therein savouring very much of Popery (the nation being hardly able to bear at that time what was done); so that there were many things still continuing, which could not but be burdensome to the upright-hearted, and to the tender consciences, as the light which began their reformation did grow and increase in them.

3. That the Lord God (who in such great mercy had delivered this nation from the yoke of Popery) could not but expect that the reformation should grow and increase until it were perfected; even until nothing were left which arose from that spirit from whence Popery sprang, and which might (in its proper tendency) be serviceable to that spirit; but that all his people in this nation, might have free liberty at least (if not encouragement) to return to the pure worship of him in spirit and in truth; even as in the days of the apostles, before the apostasy from the spirit and from the truth.

4. That the reformation out of Popery was not pursued as the Lord expected it should; but a dark way of worship established in the land, and a dark church-government (both like that of Rome); whereby those that were truly conscientious, and in whom the reforming light did further and further arise, were reproached, nick-named, hated, persecuted, &c. insomuch that there was a bar set up against the proceeding of the reformation any further, and a formal way of church-government and worship erected; which was pleasing to the loose and carnal spirit; but sharp, cruel, and burdensome to the stricter sort, and to such as were tender-hearted toward God.

5. That under this church-government and way of worship there was a going backwards towards Popery again, instead of going further from it. Things grew every day worse and worse; ceremonies daily abounding, and were more and more strictly injoined; wearing of surplices, bowing at the name of Jesus, railing

off

off the communion-tables, and making ſteps up to them; calling them high altars (bowing thrice at their approach to them) having corporaſſes over their bread, ſaying ſecond ſervice, &c. And the chief end of their viſitations was to eſtabliſh ſuch things as theſe; and to ſuppreſs lecturers, and conſcientious preachers (among whom ſome freſh life did ſpring up, for the relief of the needy and deſolate); and to curtail preaching (and praying before and after ſermons); yea, and catechizing too, which by authority was appointed in the place of the afternoon-ſermons, when they found it exceed the limits they intended. And this proceeded ſo far, that there was very little difference between us and the Papiſts, ſave only the name; the worſhip in both becoming dead, and formal, and pleaſing to the fleſhly part, but empty of that which ſhould feed and refreſh the ſpirit. Only the Lord hath reſerved to himſelf a remnant, who could not bow to theſe things; but groaned under them, and witneſſed againſt them, mourning bitterly to the Lord under the load and weight of them.

6. That when the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt this form of church-government and worſhip (as indeed it was high time for the Lord to appear; for the power and life of religion was even expiring), and he brake down all that ſtood up in the defence of it, and gave much liberty to the oppreſſed ſpirits and conſciences of his people; yet this was not pleaſing to the nation; but fain would they have had either the ſame form up again, or at leaſt ſome other ſuch-like in the ſtead of it; whereby the looſe ſpirit of the nation might be ſettled in ſome way of formal worſhip, and the growing reforming light ſnibbed in the ſpirits of the tender-hearted towards God.

Look back with a ſingle and honeſt eye. Hath it not been thus? Hath there not been a ſharp contention between God and this nation concerning this thing? The Lord hath riſen to remove the yoke from off the oppreſſed, that he might cauſe the powers of this nation to let the oppreſſed conſcience go free; but

but the nation would have them bound. It is ſtill crying to the powers and authorities in being to lay the yoke on again. When one power is broken down (becauſe it is not faithful in the Lord's hand, but ſtarts aſide from the Lord's work, for which it was choſen, to another of its own chuſing), it ſeeks to have another harder power ſet up (I mean harder to the tender conſcience); yet God overturns that alſo; and what can ſtand before him, who is riſen to ſhake terribly the earth, and to make the oaks and cedars thereof to fail, totter, and fall? O England! will nothing ſerve thy turn but the enſlaving of God's heritage? That tenderneſs of conſcience which God hath begotten in his people is his own; is that which he will inherit. It is that which he brought out of the Egyptian darkneſs of Popery, and which he is now redeeming, and delivering out of the relicks thereof: and if theſe three nations ſhould for the generality join together as one man; yea, and though other nations ſhould join with them, yet will they fall ſhort of power and wiſdom to prevent the Lord of bringing to paſs his intended work.

Was it the generality of the nations God redeemed out of Popery? Or was it a poor perſecuted remnant, for whoſe ſakes he did it, and whom he chiefly had reſpect unto? And is not the Lord able to carry on this work further and further? Did he ſuffer them always to be ſtopped in their progreſs, and held in bondage by the powers ſet up? Nay, did he not at length break them down at their cries, for their ſakes? And do ye think he will now ſuffer the line of Preſbytery to be ſtretched over them, to keep them down from riſing up any further in obedience to the pure law of life in their ſpirits? O England! in the zeal of the Lord of hoſts I could bid defiance to all thy counſels and ſtrength, though I ſhould ſee thee encompaſs round his poor ſuffering ſeed (who are very weak and fooliſh as to that kind of ſtrength and wiſdom), becauſe mine eye ſeeth the Almighty One (before whom, in thy greateſt ſtrength and height of confidence, thou art

art as nothing) engaged againſt thee; but I rather chuſe to mourn over thee, and to wait for the opening of thine eyes, by the anointing of the true eye-ſalve, which alone can unbewitch the nations. Yea, in bowels of tender love and pity to thee, I do beſeech thee, O England! conſider thyſelf; do not undo thy happineſs and proſperity; fight not againſt the Holy One, the Mighty One of deſpiſed diſtreſſed Iſrael; be not tempted to follow Iſrael into the wilderneſs (where they now are, and whither the hand of the Lord hath led them), to bring them back again into bondage, becauſe thou ſeeſt them entangled in the ſtraits, and nothing appears able to deliver out of thy hand. Remember what befel Pharaoh and all his hoſt. This Iſrael, whom thou hunteſt, is dearer to the Lord than ever that Iſrael was: for that was but a ſhadow of the true ſeed; but the true life itſelf is begotten and brought forth in many of theſe; and the power and preſence of the Lord is mightily with them, and amongſt them; though thou, in the unbelief, canſt not ſee it. There is now an hour of temptation upon thee; there appears a fair opportunity to thee to be revenged on them, and bring them under. Take heed what thou doſt, leſt he, who hath the power over all, bring thee under, and ſet them on the top. Seek righteouſneſs, ſeek the good of all, ſeek true reformation, and the Lord will bleſs thee: but if thou think to obtain the ſetting up of old forms, and ways of worſhip and government, or any new ones like to the old, under which the righteous cannot but groan (though the wicked and looſe ſpirit may rejoice), thou wilt be deceived, and thy miſtake may prove very dangerous and bitter to thee. Our earneſt deſires to the Lord for thee are, that thou mayeſt be ſpared as much as poſſible (and that the ſufferings of God's people, from the very firſt rent from Popery till this day, may not be laid to thy charge); but iniquity is ſo twiſted into thy bowels, that with much tearing, which will cauſe great pain to thee, it can hardly be ſeparated from thee. Thou art too wiſe and wilful; this

this is the cauſe of thy ſorrow. If thou couldſt fear before the Lord, and patiently wait for the revealing of his will, and of his guiding thee by his wiſdom, and not be ſo enraged againſt inſtruments, but ſee through them to his hand (who hath afflicted thee), and humble thyſelf before that, how ſweetly and eaſily might his work go on in thee! But alas! haſt thou not ſet thyſelf againſt it from the very firſt? And now thou art much pleaſed with a ſeeming probability of turning it backward. Ah, poor land! what will this ſtiff ſpirit (which hath all along theſe times of trouble repined at and oppoſed the work of the Lord) bring thee to?

The time of reformation is come; the work of reformation is begun by that power which is able to carry it on; and that which now ſtandeth in the way thereof (how high and mighty ſoever) will be overturned. And although (as to what men have done) the cauſe and work of reformation may juſtly become a reproach; yet the foundation of reformation which God hath laid is glorious: and in theſe troubleſome times is he rearing up the building of his New Jeruſalem, which when he hath finiſhed and brought forth, will dazzle the eyes of the whole earth. O England! be not high-minded, run not out into parties and breaches, in the heady will; but fear before him whoſe power is over thee (who comprehends all thy counſels, ſtrength, deſigns, and hopes, as with a ſpan, and when they are at the height, can moulder them to nothing with the touch of his finger); for his will muſt ſtand, not thine.

Written the 19th of the 11th Month, 1659.

This is from him, whom, in the day of thy diſtreſs and bitter calamity (which thy preſent courſes lead apace unto), thou wilt confeſs to have been thy true friend,

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

TO

TO THE

ARMY.

FRIENDS,

DO ye not ſee how often ye have been betrayed? The Lord hath done great things for you, and by you, and put great opportunities into your hands; but ſtill they have been loſt, his work fallen to the ground, and his name become a reproach over all the earth, through your means. Oh! be abaſed before the Lord, and lie very low, and conſider how juſtly he may lay you aſide from being his inſtruments, in that great and glorious work he hath to bring to paſs. If ye deſire to ſtand, look up to the Lord, to keep your ſpirits very low, and poor, and meek, and ready to hear. Oh! wait to know what hath betrayed you hitherto! for aſſuredly that lies in wait to betray you again: and if the Lord mightily preſerve you not from it, will make you forget him, and cauſe you to mind and ſeek yourſelves afreſh, ſo ſoon as ever your fears are over. Therefore, in the day of your proſperity, the Lord watch over you, and keep you cloſe to the ſtirrings and honeſt movings for publick good, that have ſprung up in your hearts in the days of your adverſity; and take heed, leſt the ſubtilty in the wiſe fleſhly-reaſoning part deceive you; but fear the Lord in your reaſonings, and beg earneſtly of him to keep the ſimplicity alive in you, that the fleſhly wiſdom get not maſtery over it. For the evil counſellor is near you, even in your own boſoms, and he lies lurking in plauſible and fair-ſeeming reaſonings,

reaſonings. Therefore keep cloſe to the ſimplicity, and let your reaſonings be ſervants to it, and not maſters over it. Ah! remember how often ye have ſtarted aſide like a warped bow: become now at length upright to the Lord, carrying faithfully to the mark thoſe his arrows which he is ſhooting at the regions of Babylon.

This is from one who waits for what the Lord will effect, and hopes at length to ſee an inſtrument in his hand wherein his ſoul will delight.

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

A QUESTION

Propounded to the Rulers, Teachers, and People of the Nation of ENGLAND, for them ſingly to anſwer in their Hearts and Conſciences, in the Fear and Dread of the mighty GOD of Heaven and Earth; whoſe mighty Arm of Power is ſtretched out in this Nation, firſt to overturn what ſtands in his Way, and then to eſtabliſh (in the Place thereof) what he hath purpoſed in his Heart. And this is the thing which the LORD hath determined to do, both particularly in Perſons, and generally throughout the Earth; namely, to pull down the Mighty from their Seats, and to exalt the Humble and Meek (who are made ſuch by the Preſence and Power of his Life in them), that he alone may be exalted in the Spirits of his People, and throughout the Earth. And this Work hath the LORD begun already; for his great and notable Day hath appeared, and breaketh forth apace; though the Eye which is cloſed cannot ſee it, nor the benumbed Senſe feel it. But he that hath an Ear, let him hear the Sound of the LORD's Trumpet, which ſaith, in the mighty Breath of his Spirit of Life, Awake! ye Dead, and ſtand up to Judgment; for the Day of Recompence is come; the Day of the eternal Vengeance of our GOD, and the Day of his everlaſting Mercy and plentiful Redemption. The Queſtion is as followeth.

WHEN *this nation was rent from Popery* (in part I mean: for wholly it was never rent, but did ſtill remain in the ſame ſpirit; though by the magiſtrate's

ſtrate's ſword it was forced from that form and way of worſhip which the pope had eſtabliſhed) *did it wait on the Lord for the guidance of his ſpirit and power, thereby to build up a true church and habitation for God in the ſpirit? Or did it take ſuch materials as were ready at hand, and frame up a building as well as it could, wherewith the conſciences of many (that were tender-hearted towards God) were even then diſſatisfied, and felt in the eternal life of God the reformation not to be right in its beginning?*

This is a weighty queſtion: for an error at firſt, an error in the foundation, is great, and the cauſe of many following errors. If the Spirit of God was not then conſulted with, and waited upon; if he did not raiſe the fabrick, ſurely the building was not right. It was the Spirit of God which rent men from Popery (ſo far as they were acted upon pure and honeſt principles), ſhewing the blackneſs and darkneſs thereof, and kindling deſires in them after a more inward and ſpiritual way of worſhip. Thus far was of him. But if men did then conſult with their own wiſdom, for the ordering and carrying on of the reformation, and ſo upon politick grounds and reaſons did raiſe up a building, and not wait on the Lord for his light and power to build with; then ſurely that building was not of God, nor could he be honoured thereby, nor his truth preſerved, nor the integrity and conſcientiouſneſs of his people's hearts towards him cheriſhed; but all this would ſuffer and be in danger by this building, and a contrary ſpirit be pleaſed with it, and thrive under it. And hath it not been ſo? Were not the Non-conformiſts to it (though known to be precious perſons in the favour and life of God) looked upon and dealt with as enemies, while ſuch Conformiſts as were known to be looſe and ſcandalous, yet could flouriſh well enough, and make a fair ſhew in this national church, and be zealous contenders for the way of worſhip and government in it? Yea, thoſe that have been ſtrict in their lives and converſations,

and truly zealous towards God in their ſouls and ſpirits, preſſing after righteouſneſs and purity; ſuch as theſe, though they might conform, yet were they not hated, nick-named, in ſcorn called Puritans, and ſnares laid for them to intrap them? And how could it be otherwiſe? For if the building was not right, if the conſtitution and government of this church was not of God, then it could not favour and cheriſh that which was of God, then it could not nouriſh or be pleaſed with obedience to his pure life and Spirit, but rather with obedience to its carnal form. For ſo it is in truth and reality before God; this church, with its whole conſtitution, government, order, and way of worſhip, was either of God's ſpirit, and ſo ſpiritual; or of man's wiſdom, and ſo carnal. If of God's ſpirit, then it will be a friend to that which is ſpiritual, and an enemy to that which is carnal; if of man's wiſdom, then it will be a friend to that which is carnal, and an enemy to that which is ſpiritual. And this is a true mark of the true church, and of the true church power and government; it begets and preſerves that which is ſpiritual, it beats down the carnal; whereas the church power and government, which is carnal, preſerves that which is carnal (a carnal unity, a carnal uniformity in worſhip, &c.) but checks, ſnubs, ſmites, and perſecutes that which is ſpiritual; and for ſuch a kind of power and government to be ſet up, the carnal part in every man contends and cries out. And ſo long as there is any change made in this church by the ſame wiſdom, it will never be otherwiſe; it will be from carnal to carnal, and ſo ſtill againſt that which is ſpiritual. Therefore look back ſingly, and conſider what the building was, and how it was reared up; and ſee whether it was of God or no: or whether it was built up in the forwardneſs of man's ſpirit, by carnal reaſonings and conſultings, accommodating things to the preſent ſtate of the nation, and not to the plain and clear meaſure of God's truth.

Firſt,

Firſt, See what the materials were whereof this church was built. Were they materials fit to make up a true church of? Was it built up of a people truly converted to God? Of perſons changed in heart? Of perſons ſenſible of the foregoing idolatry; and turned in their ſouls, minds, and ſpirits from dead idols towards the living God? Or was not rather the heart of the nation ſtill inclined towards Popery, even while it was turning into a Proteſtant church? And was it not chiefly made a Proteſtant church by the force of the civil power, which wound in by degrees a Proteſtant intereſt; the heart of the people ſtill remaining unchanged, and hankering after Popery; but at length, in tract of time, ſeeing they knew not how to help it, won over to Proteſtantiſm with the ſame heart and ſpirit that they came out of Popery with? Conſider ſeriouſly in the ſight of God (who looketh both forward and backward upon things with a true eye), whether it hath been thus or no?

Secondly, See what kind of miniſtry was then ſet up. Was it a new miniſtry (as John Huſs, that famous Bohemian martyr, propheſied ſhould ariſe, and as Luther ſaw the neceſſity of, utterly diſclaiming the deriving of orders from Popiſh biſhops)? or was it the ſame miniſtry which was derived from Rome? It is a ſore ſtreſs the miniſters of England have been put to; namely, to plead for the truth of the miniſtry of the church of Rome, that thereby they might defend their own. Now mark this thing following; there aroſe falſe apoſtles, falſe prophets, falſe teachers in the apoſtles days; whom Satan clothed like true apoſtles, like true prophets, like *miniſters of righteouſneſs*. Thus they appeared, thus they ſeemed to be; but they were not of God, but Satan; not ſent of God, not inſpired by God; but inſpired and ſent by Satan. Theſe falſe apoſtles, theſe falſe prophets, fought againſt the true church, and true miniſtry of Chriſt. And though they were oftentimes diſcovered, by the ſpirit of Chriſt in his church, and the

church preſerved from them, yet we find related in ſcriptures, that at length they did prevail, inſomuch as the third part of the true miniſters were ſhaken, and ſwept down from their place and ſtanding by them, Rev. xii. 4. yea, and at length the church herſelf (as to the truth of her outward ſtate) overcome, and fled into the wilderneſs, ver. 6—14. and a falſe church got up in her ſtead, which hath a cup of fornication to make people ſpiritually drunk; and to bewitch them from the true worſhip of God, into imitations and likeneſſes, Rev. xvii. 4. and thoſe who will not acknowledge her likeneſſes and imitations to be the truth, but in the word of the lamb's teſtimony witneſs againſt them, ſhe drinks their blood, ver. 6. Now can any man of any manner of ſeriouſneſs and ſobriety of ſpirit (who is not drunk and overcome with this whore's wine) believe, that after falſe prophets had got the day, and ſet up the falſe church, that they would ſet up the true miniſtry in it? O how blind have men been, that they ſhould go about, and take ſuch pains, to derive a ſucceſſion of the true miniſtry from the miniſters or prophets of the falſe church!

Thirdly, What kind of maintenance was ſet up for this miniſtry? Was it a goſpel maintenance? Was it that they ſhould live of the goſpel, which cannot but open mens ſpirits to the true miniſters thereof? Or was it a maintenance forced from the people, by that outward power which ſet up the church? And was this maintenance like unto, or the ſame with, the maintenance which the Popiſh miniſtry had before in this nation, for their idolatrous ſervice?

Fourthly, What kind of worſhip was it, which was ſet up? Was it the worſhip of the goſpel, which is in ſpirit and truth? Or was it a form of worſhip invented by man, and ſo accommodated to the preſent temper of the nation, that they might with the more eaſe and willingneſs ſtep out of Popery into it, becauſe of its nearneſs and likeneſs thereto?

Fifthly,

Fifthly, What kind of church government was ſet up? Was it a pure ſpiritual government? Was it put into the hands of the ſpirit? (For nothing is to govern, or can rightly govern over the ſpirits of Chriſt's people in ſpiritual things, but the ſpirit of Chriſt.) Or did men frame up a church government by their wiſdom, and put it into the hands of ſuch as might exerciſe it without, yea and againſt, the ſpirit?

Sixthly, What kind of order was ſet up in this church? Was it the true goſpel order? Was it the order of Chriſt's ſpirit, whereby the carnal wiſdom of man might be quenched, and his ſpirit have ſcope? Or was it a carnal order, whereby the carnal wiſdom, learning, knowledge, and arts of man might have ſcope, and the ſpirit in its motions be quenched?

Seventhly, By what wiſdom was the Common Prayer-Book compiled and ſet up; and ſurplices, croſſes, and other ceremonies injoined? Was it by the wiſdom of God's Spirit, for the building up of the ſpirits of his people in the faith? Or was it for the pleaſing and ſatisfying of the carnal part in people? And what ſort of perſons were they who did moſt contend for, and were moſt pleaſed with, theſe? Were they, for the generality, the ſtricter, or the looſer ſort?

Eighthly, How came it about, that the ſupreme magiſtrate of this nation was made chief head and governor of this church under Chriſt? Was this from Chriſt's inſtitution, or of man's wiſdom and invention? If of man's inventing wiſdom, then againſt Chriſt, then of antichriſt's ſpirit, who exalteth that which is not of Chriſt, to ſit and govern in his temple.

Oh! weigh theſe things; look about thee, O England! O rulers, teachers, and people look about you! And if it plainly (upon a naked ſearch) appear that there was, at the very firſt, a foundation laid of ſuppreſſing the true worſhip, and the witneſſes to it; do not ſhut your eyes. Have not the people of God ſtill

been misrepresented, had reproachful names cast upon them, and in some degree or other been persecuted from the beginning of the reformation? And though names change, and rulers change, and the teachers change, and the people also change in their religion and worships, yet is not the persecuting spirit still the same, and the persecuted spirit still the same also? The persecuting spirit changeth its cover often, but still retains its nature, hunting after the life and pure power of the spirit, in the children which are begotten of God. Are not the people of God in every change a despised people, and their integrity towards God still struck at? When the Lord began a little to wipe off the reproach from them, at the beginning of these troubles, and the persecuting spirit could not so conveniently hunt them any longer under the name of Puritans, then other names were invented for them, whereby the same spirit sought to make them appear odious again, under a new reproachful title, that so it might be persecuting the same thing afresh? Oh how mightily hath the Lord striven to keep the powers and people of this nation from falling upon his people! and yet still, so soon as they come to any peace, and feeling of power, they are at it again. O England! thy persisting in this cannot but bring wrath upon thee. What wouldst thou have of us? Shall we not fear the Lord? Shall we not obey the Lord? Shall we not worship the Lord our God, who hath redeemed, and is redeeming, our souls from death? Shall we not be Protestants in truth and uprightness of heart before the Lord? Shall we not testify against the Popish spirit, and Popish practices, and all new inventions of the same spirit (though they get ever so fine a covering) in the church of England, as well as against them in the church of Rome? The Lord is our witness, we would not offend thee, O England; no not the meanest persons of the whole nation: but from out of Popery we are called (and from whatever else the same nature and spirit may take

take up in the ſtead of it), to follow the Lord our God towards the land of the living; and follow him we muſt, however thou deal with us. O England! If it had been ſo that thy rulers had built up a true church, yet the evil ſpirit, the unclean ſpirit, would have endeavoured to pollute it, to provoke the Lord to remove his candleſtick (which is an inward act of his ſpirit) the outward building might ſtand notwithſtanding, and then thy houſe muſt have been left deſolate, and the ſame ſpirit would then have called his people out of it. But if thy building hath not been ſpiritual, and in the ſpirit, how can the ſpirit of the Lord ſuffer the children begotten by him to lodge in it! Oh! when wilt thou have an ear to hear, that the Lord's wrath may aſſuage towards thee; which kindleth more and more, and is entering apace within thy bowels! This, this is the Lord's charge againſt thee: *Thou art for the Proteſtant name* (it is now become thy intereſt, and a goodly covering in thy eyes) *but againſt the Proteſtant ſpirit*; which the Lord calleth to follow him further and further from all the things of Popery, and from all the things like Popery. And the Lord will put a difference between the Proteſtant name and the Proteſtant ſpirit; between them that ſerve him in the fear which he begets in the heart, and them that ſet up that kind of fear which is taught by the precepts of men.

O England! we are now ſeemingly in thy hands (who haſt long handled us very roughly); and we have no ſtrength againſt thee, nor no hope of deliverance from thee, but in the Lord our God; and there we are at reſt, waiting upon him, in the innocency and integrity which he hath begotten in our hearts, until he plead our cauſe. And in that day thou wilt ſee that we have not been thine enemies, and then thou wilt mourn over that miſt of darkneſs, which hath with-held thine eye from diſcerning what true friends we have been to thee, and how we have endeavoured, and fought with our hearts

to

to prevent thy drinking of that bitter cup, which is to go round the nations. And if thine ear could have been opened, thou mighteſt have been ſpared.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE goſpel is free; the grace and mercy thereof free; the ſpirit a free ſpirit (freely given of God, and freely miniſtering for God); the church a ſpiritual building, built in the freedom and liberty of the life of the ſpirit; the order and government of the church is from and in the ſame free ſpirit, guiding a people whom God makes willing in the day of his power; the maintenance of the miniſtry a free maintenance; the whole obedience and worſhip free, in the free ſpirit, and in the truth which is begotten in the heart by the free ſpirit. The head of this church is Chriſt, the living ſpirit, who hath appointed none to be head under him here on earth, nor hath given power to any to make any laws concerning his kingdom, or the government thereof; concerning his miniſtry, or the maintenance thereof. (Is it not thus? Doth not the leaſt child of light ſee it to be thus?) But the church of England was a church built by force; ſettled by force; her miniſters maintained by force; her order, unity, uniformity, and government, forcible; and the free pure ſpirit of life can have no ſcope in her, but according to the wills of her rulers, teachers, and people: if it move otherwiſe, if it appear otherwiſe, it is ſure to be nick-named and perſecuted. O England! England! can God always ſuffer theſe things? Will not his hand at length be ſtretched forth againſt thee?

The 14th of the 12th Month, 1659.

Given forth by ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger, in the fear and dread of the Moſt High.

REMARK.

"THE day of the Lord ſo cometh as a thief in "the night. For when they ſhall ſay, Peace "and ſafety; then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon "them, as travail upon a woman with child, and "they ſhall not eſcape," 1 Theſ. v. 2, 3. And when the Lord cometh, woe to him who is found beating his fellow ſervant, and endeavouring to force the conſcience (which God hath made tender and pliable to the voice of his ſpirit) from its obedience and ſubjection thereto.

A N

EXAMINATION

OF THE

GROUNDS or CAUSES

Which are ſaid to INDUCE the

Court of BOSTON, in NEW-ENGLAND,

TO MAKE THAT

Order or Law of Baniſhment, upon Pain of Death,

AGAINST THE

QUAKERS.

AS ALSO OF

The GROUNDS and CONSIDERATIONS by them produced, to manifeſt the WARRANTABLENESS and JUSTNESS both of their Making and Executing the ſame; which they now ſtand deeply engaged to DEFEND, having already thereupon put Two of them to Death.

AS ALSO OF

Some further Grounds for juſtifying of the ſame, in an APPENDIX to JOHN NORTON's Book (which was printed after the Book itſelf, yet as Part thereof); whereto he is ſaid to be appointed by the General Court.

AND LIKEWISE OF

The Arguments briefly hinted, in that which is called, "A "true Relation of the Proceedings againſt the QUAKERS, &c."

Whereunto ſomewhat is added

About the Authority and Government Chriſt excluded out of his Church; which occaſioneth ſomewhat concerning the true Church Government.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

The ſtone the builders refuſed, is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. Pſ. cxviii. 22, 23.

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes. Even ſo Father; for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. Mat. xi. 25, 26.

TO THE

Rulers, Teachers, and People

OF

NEW ENGLAND.

MANY a weary ſtep hath my poor ſoul fetched, and many difficulties and hardſhips hath it met with in its purſuit after truth. The immortal ſeed hath deeply ſuffered in me through the miſts of darkneſs, and various ſtratagems and powers of the enemy, which have often encompaſſed me, and diſtreſſed my ſpirit exceedingly. I have known many battles, received deep wounds; yea, and have been in deaths and graves often, where the living ſeed hath languiſhed for want of the living ſpring. Yet this thing, to the praiſe and glory of the Preſerver of Iſrael, may I ſpeak; the ſenſe of God, and the ſavour of his ſpirit, was never wholly taken away from me; though many times I knew it not, but was too apt to diſtruſt it, being ignorant of the way of its appearing in me. The ſcriptures I always exceedingly prized, and a deep knowledge of them, from an experimental ſenſe of the things they ſpake of, was beſtowed on me: but I knew not what it was which gave me the knowledge, nor how it ſprang; but went about ſtill to fix it in the letter, and ſo gave away the glory from the ſpirit, which ſhines above and beyond the letter, and ought ſo to be acknowledged.

Before this deſpiſed people appeared, I was even quite worn out, and ſaid, My hope is cut off from the Lord;

Lord; there is no such appearance of him to be looked for as my poor distressed soul wants. Live without the presence of his spirit I could not; where to meet with his spirit could I hear no news; and that precious knowledge which I had through the operation of God upon my heart from the living spring; the same hand which gave me, also brake in pieces, and pulled down that inward building which was reared up in my spirit.

What a man of sorrows I became hereupon, how I mourned all the day long, and roared out after my God all the night-season, is not to be uttered. And if it might be the Lord's pleasure, oh! that my misery might end with me, and that this might be the issue of all my sufferings, to fit me to be a faithful instrument in the hand of the Lord for the preserving of others therefrom!

Now this was it which undid me; namely, the getting up of the fleshly wisdom and understanding; which, though God had broken in me mightily several times, yet it still had some secret device or other to creep in again into me, and to twine about my spirit, undiscerned by me: but this effect still attended it; by degrees, like a canker, it eat out the sweetness and freshness of my life and spirit; and exalted that part in me which God hides the mysteries of his kingdom from.

At first acquaintance with this rejected people, that which was eternal of God in me opened, and I did immediately in my spirit own them as children of my Father, truly begotten of his life by his own spirit; but the wise reasoning part presently rose up, contending against their uncouth way of appearance, and in that I did disown them, and continued a stranger to them, and a reasoner against them, for above twelve months; and by weighing and considering things in that part, was still further and further off from discerning their leadings by the life and spirit of God into those things. But at length it pleased the Lord to draw out his sword against that part in me, turning

turning the wiſdom and ſtrength thereof backward, and to open that eye in me again, wherewith he had given me to ſee the things of his kingdom in ſome meaſure from a child; and then I ſaw and felt them grown in that life and ſpirit, which I, through the treachery of the fleſhly-wiſe part, had been eſtranged to, and had adulterated from. And now what bitter days of mourning and lamentation (even for ſome years ſince) I have had over this, the Lord alone fully knows. Oh! I have known it to be a bitter thing to follow this wiſdom in underſtanding of ſcriptures, in remembering of ſcriptures, in remembering of experiences, and in many more inward ways of workings, that many cannot bear to hear. The Lord hath judged me for that, and I have borne the burden and condemnation of that, which many at this day wear as their crown. And now what am I at length? A poor worm! Whom can I warn effectually? Whom can I help? Whom can I ſtop from running into the pit? But though I am nothing, I muſt ſpeak; for the Lord draweth and moveth me: and how unſerviceable ſoever my pity be, yet my bowels cannot but roll, both towards thoſe that are in miſery, and thoſe that are running into miſery.

Read in the fear, and in ſimplicity, what was ſo written; and the Lord open that eye in you which can ſee the way of life, and diſcover the paths of the myſtery of iniquity in its moſt hidden workings in the heart; that ye ſleep not the ſleep of eternal death, and ſo at laſt be awakened in the bowels of that wrath and fiery indignation, which that ſpirit which erreth from, and tranſgreſſeth the life and light within, can neither bear nor eſcape.

A N

EXAMINATION

OF THE

GROUNDS or CAUSES, &c.

THAT in New-England there hath been a law made of baniſhing the Quakers, ſo called, and of death in caſe of return, is well known in theſe parts; but what induced them hereunto, and what juſt grounds and reaſons they had for it, many are not acquainted with, but are very much diſſatisfied concerning their proceedings therein; fearing that they have diſhonoured God, brought a reproach upon the name of Chriſt and his goſpel, exceeded the limits of their power, given an ill example of perſecution, laid a foundation of hardening their hearts againſt God, and of drawing his heavy wrath upon them; all which they cannot but be guilty of, in caſe it ſhould be proved that they have been miſtaken, and that theſe people (upon a further ſearch) ſhould appear to them to be of God, as they have already to very many, who have been exceedingly prejudiced againſt them, till they came more meekly to hear and conſider their caſe. For there are many here in Old-England, and in other parts, who once reviled, reproached, and thought they could hardly do bad enough againſt them; who now, in the ſingleneſs of their hearts, can bleſs God for raiſing up ſuch a people, and that they themſelves were not cut off in their blind zeal againſt them; but in the rich mercy of God had a way made for the removing

removing of their prejudices and hard thoughts, and for the opening of their eyes, whereby they came to ſee that theſe are indeed a precious people of God; begotten, brought forth, and guided by his power; and that it is his living truth, which they (in obedience to his living power) are drawn to bear witneſs to, and to hold forth unto the world. And one ſuch teſtimony for them is of more weight and value in a true balance, than thouſands of teſtimonies againſt them from ſuch who are prejudiced, and have not patience to conſider things in equity and uprightneſs of heart, and alſo whoſe intereſt lies another way.

Now meeting of late with a paper beginning thus: *At a general court held at Boſton the 8th of October*, 1659. (wherein, by way of preface, there is firſt an account given of what induced them to make this law of baniſhment and death, and then grounds and conſiderations laid down to clear it to be warrantable and juſt), it was upon my heart to conſider and examine theſe, to ſee whether they did ariſe from the ſeed of God, and from the true knowledge of the ſcriptures by his ſpirit, and ſo were weighty to the conſcience which ſingly waits upon God for ſatisfaction about truth; or whether they did ariſe from the fleſhly part, and from fleſhly reaſonings upon ſcriptures, and ſo were but chaffy, and not able to ſatisfy the weighty conſidering ſpirit, as in the ſight of God.

And this I was the more induced to do, becauſe I found bowels rolling towards them, and a ſenſe of what might eaſily be their ſnare, which hath overtaken and entangled many: for many who have blamed others ſeverely, and really thought how well they themſelves would have amended things, if ever they came into place and power, yet have failed, and run into the very ſame error, when they have come to the trial. So theſe perſons, when they were formerly perſecuted in England, no doubt thought and intended, if ever they came to be free from it, to lay a foundation againſt it: yet when they came to the point, and felt their condition changed, inſomuch as it was now in

their hand to determine what was the way of worſhip, church-government, and order, there lay a great temptation before them to ſet up what they judged to be right, and to force all others to a conformity to it. Yea, now was their great danger, and time to beware, leſt the ſame perſecuting ſpirit did get up in them, which their being perſecuted was a proper means to keep down: and if ſo (if the ſame ſpirit which perſecuted them got up in them), then they who were once perſecuted could not poſſibly forbear perſecuting; for that ſpirit will perſecute where-ever it gets up. And having laid its foundation of perſecution under a plauſible cover, then by degrees it more and more veils the eye, hardens the heart, and takes away the tenderneſs which was in the perſons before, while they themſelves were perſecuted. Now I cannot but pity thoſe that fall into the ſnare of the enemy: eſpecially thoſe who are taken in ſo great a ſnare, and come to ſo great a loſs of their tenderneſs towards God, his truths, and people, and run ſo great an hazard and danger of the loſs of their own ſouls.

The Grounds or Cauſes expreſſed of their making that Law of Baniſhment, are in Subſtance theſe three.

1. *THE coming of the* QUAKERS *from foreign parts, and from other colonies, at ſundry times, and in ſeveral companies and numbers, into the juriſdiction of the Maſſachuſets.*

Anſw. This, of itſelf, is far from any warrant; for "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof." And though they claim a propriety in it, yet it is ſtill more the Lord's than theirs; and he may ſend any one of his ſervants into it at his pleaſure, upon what meſſage or ſervice it ſeemeth good unto him. So that the great queſtion to be determined here is this: *Whether theſe perſons came from the Lord, in his will, and*

and at his appointment; or whether they came of themselves, and in their own wills? For if they came by commiſſion and appointment from the Lord of heaven and earth, their warrant was without doubt ſufficient. But if they came in their own will, and upon their own deſigns, then they went out of the Lord's counſel and protection, and muſt bear their own burden. Now conſider whether ye were tender in the due weighing of this, before your impriſoning and dealing hardly with them. For if, at their firſt coming, ye impriſoned them, and engaged yourſelves againſt them, ye thereby made yourſelves unfit for an equal conſideration of the cauſe; and God might juſtly then leave your eyes to be cloſed, and your hearts hardened againſt his truths and people, for beginning with them ſo harſhly and unrighteouſly, and not in his fear.

2. *Thoſe leſſer puniſhments of the houſe of correction, and impriſonment for a time, having been inflicted on ſome of them; but not ſufficing to deter and keep them away.* Why do ye omit cutting off of ears? Are ye aſhamed to mention that amongſt the reſt? Indeed the remembrance of it ſtrikes upon the ſpirits of people here, and perhaps in New-England alſo.

Anſw. They that are ſent by the Lord, and go in the guidance of his ſpirit, cannot be deterred from obedience to him in his ſervice and work, either by leſſer or greater puniſhments. Puniſhments deter the evil-doer; but he that doth well is not afraid of being puniſhed; but is taught, and made willing, and enabled to ſuffer for righteouſneſs-ſake, *Phil.* i. 29. And ye will find your greater puniſhments as ineffectual to obtain your end, as your leſſer. For they whoſe lives (in the power of God) are ſacrificed up to the will of God, are no more afraid of death, than they are of whips, priſons, cruel uſage in priſons, and cutting off of ears. Surely it had been a ſweeter, a more Chriſtian and ſafer courſe, to have weighed the thing in God's fear and dread, before ye had begun any of your puniſhments. But your own late relation con-

feſſeth, that ye began with them upon reports from Barbadoes and England; from good hands, ye ſay; and ſo they of Damaſcus might have ſaid, if they had received the letters from the high-prieſt, or relations from zealous and devout Jews. And I have heard related from many hands (which, having drank in prejudices from reports, and begun with impriſoning of them, might eaſily follow) that they were never afforded a fair hearing; but at your courts, queſtions were put to intrap them, and they not ſuffered to plead the righteouſneſs and innocency of their cauſe, but endeavours uſed to draw them to that (and a watching to catch that from them) which would bring them within the compaſs of ſome of your laws. Your conſciences know how true theſe things are, and will one day give in a clear and true teſtimony, although ye ſhould be able to bribe them at preſent.

3. *That their coming thither was upon no other grounds or occaſion, for aught that could appear, than to ſcatter their corrupt opinions, and to draw others to their way, and ſo to make diſturbance.*

Anſw. Chriſt ſaith to his diſciples, "Ye are the "ſalt of the earth, and the light of the world:" and they are not to lie ſtill, and keep their light under a buſhel; but to lighten and ſeaſon the world, as the Lord calleth and guideth them. And if the Lord doth ſee that New-England, notwithſtanding all its profeſſion and talk of the things of God, hath need of his ſalt to ſavour it with, and of his light to enlighten them with, and ſo ſendeth his meſſengers and ſervants among them, they have no reaſon to be offended with the Lord for this, or with his people, or with the truths they bring. They have long had a form up, and it may have eaten out the power, that they may not be ſo ſavoury now in their eaſe and authority in New-England, as they were under their troubles and perſecutions in Old-England: and God may, in kindneſs to them, ſend among them a fooliſh people to ſtir them up and provoke them to jealouſy. Now their coming thus is not to "ſcatter corrupt opinions;"

opinions;" but, by the power of truth, to ſcatter that which ſcatters from the Lord. Nor is it to draw to their way, but to the Lord, to Chriſt, his living way; which they are exhorted to try, and feel, and certainly to know, before they receive. Nor doth it make any "diſturbance," but only to that which is at eaſe in the fleſh, and fleſhly forms of worſhip. And Iſrael of old was often thus diſturbed by the prophets of God (though they ſtill could not bear it, but were enemies to the prophets for it), notwithſtanding they had received their way of worſhip certainly from God's hand. How much more may the Lord take liberty, by his ſervants and meſſengers, to diſturb theſe who never ſo received it, but have formed up a way out of the ſcriptures, whereof many that are truly conſcientious, doubt whether it be the way or no; even as they themſelves doubt, and are ready to contend againſt, the ways that others have formed?

Now thoſe that pick a quarrel with truth, and ſeek matter againſt it to perſecute it, do not call it truth, but error, corrupt opinions, the way of a ſect, the making of diſturbance, or ſuch-like. And perſecutors, for the moſt part, do not only ſay this, but bring forth their ſtrong arguments; inſomuch as the perſecutor is commonly juſt in his own eyes, and the perſecuted is blamed as the evil-doer, and cauſe of his own ſufferings. Were the biſhops without their plea? Nay, did not he that was called Dr. Burgeſs (in his book) ſeem to carry the cauſe clear againſt the nonconformiſts? And why the biſhops might not eſtabliſh their way by authority, or the Preſbyters their way, as well as thoſe accounted independents their way (not regarding the Diſſenters, or tender-conſcienced) I confeſs I ſee not; but that they have juſtified the biſhops by their practiſing the ſame thing, and ſo unjuſtly condemned them in words.

But how can ye ſay, "for aught that could appear?" when ye were ſo unfit (through receiving of prejudices and reports, and beginning ſo roughly with them) to conſider what might be made appear, and alſo ſo

far from giving way to them to make what they could appear, as is before expreſſed? And doth not this alſo imply that there may be a juſt, righteous, and warrantable cauſe of their coming, in relation to God and his ſervice, though it doth not yet appear to you? And in a meeker and cooler temper, when another eye is opened in you, ye may ſee and acknowledge that cauſe, who are the Lord's ſervants; whether they come in his name or no; whether they are his truths or no, which they bring with them. Theſe are things God opens to the humble, to the meek, to ſuch as fear before him, and wait for his counſel therein; but thoſe that can determine things by intelligence beforehand from other parts, and impriſon perſons as ſoon as they come, and ſo proceed on with a ſtiff reſolution againſt them, how are theſe in any capacity to ſeek or receive counſel from God in a caſe of ſo great concernment? So that at laſt, even when they have drunk their blood, they muſt be forced to ſay, "for "aught that could appear," this was their only end, work, and intent; but whether it was ſo or no, they do not certainly know.

Thus far is in anſwer to the account they give, by way of preface, to what led them to the making of this law of baniſhment and death. Now the grounds and conſiderations themſelves, which they held forth to clear this to be warrantable and juſt, follow to be ſcanned, which are in number ſix.

1. *The doctrine of this ſect of people* (ſay they) *is deſtructive to fundamental Truths of religion.*

Anſw. For the making of this argument forcible, two things are neceſſary; if either of which fails, it falls to the ground.

1. It is neceſſary to make manifeſt, That perſons, for holding or propagating doctrines contrary to fundamental truths of religion, are, by Chriſt's inſtitution, puniſhable with diſmembering, baniſhment, or death. For Chriſt is the head, king, and law-giver to his church: it is he that is the foundation of religion, and the giver-forth of fundamental Truths of religion:

gion: and he is the proper judge of what punishment is fit for such as either will not receive his fundamental truths of religion, or afterwards start back from them, and broach doctrines contrary thereto. Now it is required (in his name and authority) of such powers as will take upon them to inflict these kinds of punishments upon such kind of offenders, Christ's institution for this thing. Christ was as faithful in his house as Moses; and if such a course had been necessary for the preservation of his church, surely he would not have withheld it. But Christ overcomes the devil's kingdom by his spirit: by that he wins souls, and gathers into, and builds up, his church; and by that he is able to defend them. By his spirit he preacheth the truth, and soweth the seed of the kingdom; and by his spirit he upholds and maintains it. This is his way of overcoming all the mists of darkness and false doctrines; and not a magistrate's sword. "The weapons of our warfare (saith the apostle) are not carnal; but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong-holds," 2 Cor. x. 4. Are there strong-holds of darkness? Are there false doctrines broached against the truths of Christ? Who are the warriors against these? Are they the civil state, the magistrate, the earthly powers? or are they the ministers and servants of Christ? And what are the weapons that are mighty to overthrow these? Are they stocks, whips, prisons, cutting off of ears, banishment, death? Or are they of a spiritual nature? The spiritual weapons are sanctified by God to this end, and are mighty through him, able to effect it thoroughly: whereas the carnal weapons are weak and unsanctified, and can reach only the carnal part; but the strong-hold remains untouched by these. And it is only the carnal part which desires to have the use of such carnal weapons in the church: the spiritual man would conquer by his own weapon, or not at all. Christ came not to destroy mens lives, nor never gave order to have men killed about his truths. If his people be disobedient, and broach doctrines ever so contrary and destructive

ſtructive to his kingdom, he hath a ſpiritual way of fighting with them now, and hath appointed his ſervants to have his mighty ſpiritual weapons in a readineſs *for the revenging every diſobedience*, 2 Cor. x. 6. And he hath likewiſe a time of dealing with them hereafter; but he hath no where appointed that his ſubjects (if they could get the command of the ſword in a nation or country) ſhould kill ſuch. Abundance of blood hath been ſhed upon this pretence, which the Lord will make inquiſition for: it ſhould at length be ſeriouſly inquired into, what truth there is in this bloody doctrine? for under this cover all the perſecutions and ſheddings of the ſaints blood ſhelter themſelves. Oh! conſider at length how cruel and bloody, men have made the goſpel of peace by this principle; and what an advantage it gives to the carnal part in thoſe that are perſecuted, if once they can get the command of the outward ſword, to forget their own ſufferings, and ſuddenly turn perſecutors of ſuch as differ from them, though upon as weighty grounds (if not more weighty) than they differed from others upon. But this they that are uppermoſt will not yield to, that the grounds of ſuch as differ from them are ſufficient; even as thoſe that they differed from would not yield that their grounds were ſufficient. Thus ſtill they whoſe arguments go forth under the ſhelter, or by the command, of the preſent authority, are looked upon as moſt weighty; and the others cauſe is trampled upon, though ever ſo juſt, innocent, upright, and weighty in itſelf; and the meek of the earth, the humble-hearted, the tender-conſcienced towards God, are ſtill made the offenders and ſufferers: and their enemies are ſtill made their judges. I do think theſe of New-England would have once thought it hard meaſure, that Conformiſts, whom they differed from, ſhould have been the judges, whether their grounds were ſufficient or no; and yet they (ever ſince they have had the power in their hands) have taken upon them to be the judges of the ſufficiency of the grounds of ſuch as differ from them, and have as freely

freely condemned all that differed from them, and been as ſore a curb upon the tender conſcience, as ever the biſhops were. So that it is plain, that which they ſought was their own liberty (they did not like to be oppreſſed and enthralled contrary to their judgments); but not the liberty of the tender conſcience towards God, but rather the yoking and inthralling of it to their judgments, and arguments, and interpretations of ſcripture, which he that differs from, muſt be an offender with them, even as they were once accounted offenders for differing from the Conformiſts; and ſo are all become tranſgreſſors of the law of God, in doing that to others, which they would not that others ſhould do to them.

2. It is requiſite alſo to make manifeſt, that the doctrine of this ſort of people is deſtructive to the fundamental truths of religion. For if it be not ſo, then they are injured and miſrepreſented; and both their baniſhment and death, and all other puniſhments inflicted upon them on this account, will prove to have been unjuſt.

There are four inſtances given, or four particular fundamentals mentioned, to which their doctrines are ſaid to be deſtructive. Firſt, *The Sacred Trinity*. Secondly, *The Perſon of Chriſt*. Thirdly, *The holy ſcriptures, as a perfect rule of faith and life*. Fourthly, *The doctrine of perfection*.

Now for the making of the thing clear and manifeſt to every ſober mind, it is requiſite firſt to conſider what the QUAKERS hold in theſe ſeveral particulars; and then whether that which they hold in theſe reſpects be contrary to the truth of theſe things, as they are plainly related in the ſcriptures: for if that which they hold be according to the naked voice and proper intent of the ſcriptures, then they are not to be blamed; but the blame will light on their accuſers, who might eaſily be found guilty of injuring both them and the ſcriptures, both in theſe and many other things, were they not judges.

1. Concern-

1. Concerning the *Sacred Trinity*. They generally, both in their ſpeakings, and in their writings, ſet their ſeal to the truth of that ſcripture, 1 John v. 7. That "there are three that bear record in heaven, "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit." That theſe three are diſtinct, as three ſeveral beings or perſons: this they read not; but in the ſame place they read, that "they are one." And thus they believe their being to be one, their life one, their light one, their wiſdom one, their power one: and he that knoweth and ſeeth any one of them, knoweth and ſeeth them all, according to that ſaying of Chriſt's to Philip, "He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Fa-"ther," John xiv. 9. Three there are, and yet one; thus they have read in the ſcriptures, and this they teſtify they have had truly opened to them by that very ſpirit which gave forth the ſcriptures, inſomuch that they certainly know it to be true, and own the thing from their very hearts: but as for this title of *Sacred Trinity*, they find it not in ſcripture; and they look upon ſcripture-words as fitteſt to expreſs ſcripture things by. And ſurely if a man mean the ſame thing as the ſcripture means, the ſame words will ſuffice to expreſs it: but the Papiſts and ſchool-men having miſſed of the thing which the ſcripture drives at, and apprehended ſomewhat elſe in the wiſe imagining part, have brought forth many phraſes of their own invention to expreſs their apprehenſions by, which we confeſs we have no unity with; but are content with feeling the thing which the ſcripture ſpeaks of, and with the words whereby the ſcriptures expreſs it. Now whereas they call this a fundamental, we do not find it ſo called in ſcripture; nor do we find the diſciples themſelves underſtanding therein, but knew not the Father, John xiv. 8, 9. And Chriſt going about to inform them, does not tell them of another diſtinct being or perſon: but "haſt thou not ſeen me? And "believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the "Father in me?" ver. 10. And ſo the believers at Epheſus had not ſo much as heard there was an Holy

Holy Ghoſt, Acts xix. 2. So that if ye will make this a fundamental truth, yet it is ſuch a fundamental as true faith did ſtand without, both in believers afore Chriſt's death, and in believers after. This is the great fundamental, "that God is light, and in him is "no darkneſs at all," 1 John i. 5. and the great work of the miniſtry is to ſhew men where this light is, and to turn men from the darkneſs, wherein is the power of Satan, unto this light, wherein is the power of God, Acts xxvi. 18. And he that comes into this light, and into this power, is owned in the light and in the power, wherein is the life of all the ſaints, and the true fellowſhip both with the Father and the Son, and one with another, John i. 3. 7. And the true trial of ſpirits is not by an aſſent to doctrines (which the hypocrite may aſſent to on the one hand, and the true believer may ſtartle at on the other hand); but by feeling of them in the inward virtue of the light, in the ſpirit, and in the power. This was the apoſtle's way of trial, 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20. "I will "know, not the ſpeech of them which are puffed up, "but the power; for the kingdom of God is nót in "word, but in power." A man may ſpeak high words concerning the kingdom, and get all the doctrines about it, and yet be a ſtranger to it, and quite ignorant of the power: and another may want divers doctrines concerning it (perhaps ſome of thoſe which men call fundamentals), and yet be a citizen of it, and in the power. But now, under the antichriſtian apoſtaſy, men wanting the feeling of the life and power, wherein the true judgment is, they own or diſown one another upon an aſſent or diſſent to ſuch and ſuch doctrines, and ſo fall into this great error of diſowning many whom Chriſt owns: and if they find perſons not aſſent to, or diſſenting from, any of thoſe things which they call fundamentals, then they think they may lawfully excommunicate and perſecute them. So, by this miſtake, they cut off that which is green; they perſecute that wherein is the living ſap, and cheriſh the dry and withered. That which is moſt tender towards

towards God, and moſt growing in the inward ſenſibleneſs (which cauſeth it to ſtartle at that which others can eaſily ſwallow) lies moſt open to ſuffering by this kind of trial.

2. Concerning *the Perſon of Chriſt*. They believe that Chriſt is the eternal light, life, wiſdom, and power of God, which was manifeſted in that body of fleſh which he took of the virgin: that he is the king, prieſt, and prophet of his people, and ſaveth them from their ſins, by laying down his life for them, and imputing his righteouſneſs to them; yet not without revealing and bringing forth the ſame righteouſneſs in them, which he wrought for them. And by experience they know, that there is no being ſaved by a belief of his death for them, and of his reſurrection, aſcenſion, interceſſion, &c. without being brought into a true fellowſhip with him in his death, and without feeling his immortal ſeed of life raiſed and living in them. And ſo they diſown the faith in Chriſt's death, which is only received and entertained from the relation of the letter of the ſcriptures, and ſtands not in the divine power, and ſenſible experience of the begotten of God in the heart.

Now they diſtinguiſh, according to the ſcriptures, between that which is called the Chriſt, and the bodily garment which he took. The one was fleſh, the other ſpirit. "The fleſh profiteth nothing (ſaith he), the "ſpirit quickeneth; and he that eateth me, ſhall live "by me, even as I live by the Father," John vi. 57. 63. This is the manna itſelf, the true treaſure; the other, but the viſible or earthen veſſel which held it. The body of fleſh was but the veil, Heb. x. 20. The eternal life was the ſubſtance veiled. The one he did partake of, as the reſt of the children did; the other was he which did partake thereof, Heb. ii. 14. The one was the body which was prepared for the life, for it to appear in, and be made manifeſt, Heb. x. 5. The other was the life, or light itſelf, for whom the body was prepared, who took it up, appeared in it to do the will, Pſ. xl. 7, 8. and was made

made manifeſt to thoſe eyes which were able to ſee through the veil wherewith it was covered, John i. 14.

Now is not this found according to the ſcriptures? And is not a good way to know this by unity with it, by feeling a meaſure of the ſame life made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh? 2 Cor. iv. 11. This we confeſs is our way of underſtanding things; and likewiſe of underſtanding the ſcriptures, which ſpeak of theſe things. And we have found it a far ſurer kind of knowledge; namely, to underſtand the ſcriptures by experience of that whereof the ſcripture ſpeaks, than to gueſs at the things the ſcripture ſpeaks of, by conſidering and ſcanning in the earthly part what the ſcriptures ſpeak of them. Such a kind of knowledge as this, a wiſe man may attain to a great meaſure of; but the other is peculiar to him who is begotten of God, whoſe knowledge is true and certain, though it ſeem ever ſo different from his who hath attained what he hath by the ſearch of his wiſdom.

3. Concerning *the holy ſcriptures being a perfect rule of faith and life.* The new covenant is the covenant of the goſpel; which is a living covenant, a ſpiritual covenant, an inward covenant, and the law or rule of it cannot be written outwardly. Read the tenor of the new covenant, Heb. viii. 10. "I will put my "laws into their minds, and write them in their "hearts." If God himſelf ſhould take the ſame laws, and write them outwardly; yet, ſo written, they are not the new covenant: at moſt they would be but an outward draught of laws written in the new covenant. And mark; this is one difference given between the new covenant and the old; the laws of the one were written outwardly, in tables of ſtone; the laws of the other were to be written in the heart. That is the book wherein the laws of the new covenant were promiſed to be written, and there they are to be read. So that he that will read and obey the laws of the covenant of life, muſt look for them in that book wherein God hath promiſed to write them; for

for though in other books he may read ſome outward deſcriptions of the thing, yet here alone can he read the thing itſelf. "Chriſt is the way, the truth, and "the life." What is a Chriſtian's rule? Is not the way of God his rule? Is not God's truth his rule? And is not the truth in Jeſus; where it is taught and to be heard, and to be received even as it is in Jeſus? Epheſ. iv. 22. Is not he the king, the prieſt, the prophet, the ſacrifice, the way to God, the life itſelf, the living path out of death; yea, all in all to the believer, whoſe eye is opened to behold him? The ſcriptures teſtify of Chriſt, but they are not Chriſt; they alſo teſtify of truth, and are a true teſtimony; but the truth itſelf is in Jeſus, who by his living ſpirit writes it in the heart which he hath made living. And ſo a Chriſtian's life is in the ſpirit: "If we live "in the ſpirit, let us alſo walk in the ſpirit," Gal. v. 25. The whole life and courſe of a Chriſtian is in the volume of that book, as the Lord opens the leaves of it in him. "The gift of God the meaſure of "faith" given him by God, that is his rule; that is his rule of knowledge, of propheſying, of obedience, Heb. xii. Rom i. 4.—xii. 6. If he keep there, if he walk according to the proportion of it, he errs not: but out of the faith, in the error, in all he knows, in all he believes, in all he does. *The new creature*, that which God hath new created in the heart, in which life breathes, and nothing but life breathes, which is taught by God, and true to God from its very infancy; that is his rule whereby he is to walk, the apoſtle expreſly calls it ſo, Gal. xvi. 15, 16. That which is begotten by God is a ſon; and the ſon, as he is begotten by the breath of the ſpirit, ſo he is preſerved and led by the ſame breath; and ſuch as are ſo led, are ſons, and none elſe; for it is not reading of ſcriptures, and gathering rules out thence, that makes a ſon, but the receiving of the ſpirit, and the being led by the ſpirit, Rom. viii. 14, 15. And being the whole worſhip of the goſpel is in the ſpirit, there is a neceſſity of receiving that in the firſt place; and

and then in it the ſoul learns to know and wait for its breathings and movings, and follows on towards the Lord in them. The ſpirit cannot be with-held from breathing on that which he hath begotten; and that breath is a guide, a rule, a way, to that which it breatheth upon. Now this is moſt manifeſt, even from the ſcriptures themſelves, they expreſly calling Chriſt the way, the truth, &c. the new creature, the rule, the faith, grace, or gift, given to be the rule, teſtifying the heart to be that which God hath choſen to write his laws in; but where do they call themſelves a perfect rule of faith and obedience? "They "are they (ſaith Chriſt) which teſtify of me; and ye "will not come to me, that ye might have life," John v. 39, 40. Life cannot be received from the ſcriptures, but only from Chriſt the fountain thereof; no more can the ſcriptures give the rule, but point to the fountain of the ſame life, where alone the rule of life, as the life itſelf, can be received. The ſcriptures cannot ingraft into Chriſt, nor give a living rule to him that is ingrafted; but he that hath heard the teſtimony of the ſcriptures concerning Chriſt, and hath come to him, muſt abide in him, and wait on him for the writing of the law of the ſpirit of life in his heart, and this will be his rule from the law of ſin and death, even unto the land of life. Now if men have miſtaken in the night of darkneſs, and put the ſcriptures out of their place (even in the place of the ſpirit) and ſo have become miniſters, not of the ſpirit, but of the letter, whereas the apoſtles were made "able miniſters of the New Teſtament, not "of the letter, but of the ſpirit," 2 Cor. iii. 6. let them not be offended at the ſpirit of God for teaching us otherwiſe, nor at us for learning as the ſpirit of God hath taught us; the ſcriptures alſo teſtifying that this is the rule, but no-where ſetting up themſelves for the rule. And it is the ſame ſpirit, which would now fix men in the ſcriptures, to keep men from Chriſt the living rule and only way to life eternal, as formerly kept them by traditions from the ſcriptures;

though it is hard for them who are entangled in this deceit, to ſee it.

Now for the proof of theſe things thus barely here charged, the reader is referred to Mr. Norton's (as they ſtile him) Tractate againſt the Quakers. Concerning the validity whereof, I refer the reader to Francis Howgill's anſwer thereto, wiſhing him to read both in the fear and dread of the Almighty, waiting for his counſel to guide him in the true diſcerning which of them ſavours of man's wiſdom, and which of them writes from acquaintance with the truth itſelf. In which anſwer of his, he recites ſuch errors of that Norton, as would make a great ſound againſt the Quakers, if any ſuch could juſtly be charged upon them. I ſhall mention only two or three of them, viz. That God is a diſtinct ſubſiſtence from the Son and Spirit; and that the Son is a diſtinct ſubſiſtence from the Father and the Spirit: and becauſe it is ſaid, the "Father ſhall give you another comforter," this *another* he ſaith is intelligible of the eſſence. (Are there then three diſtinct infinite eſſences or beings?) *That the ſpirit of God without the letter is no ſpirit.* (He was before the letter, he was never limited to the letter, he will be after the letter, and he is what he is without the letter). *That Chriſt's words,* John xvii. 21. *give an uncertain ſound.* (Where have any of the Quakers caſt ſuch a blemiſh upon any portion of ſcripture?) Surely this man had more need to ſeek to have his own veſſel cleanſed, than to accuſe others of errors or blaſphemy. And if he have no other way to overthrow them, than by maintaining ſuch kind of things as theſe againſt them, he will never get victory over them any other way than by the outward ſword: but by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his teſtimony, and not loving their lives unto the death, they will eaſily overcome all ſuch kind of champions.

4. The fourth and laſt inſtance which they give of the deſtructiveneſs of their doctrine to the fundamental truths of religion, is, *That opinion of theirs of being*

being perfectly pure and without sin, which (say they) *tends to overthrow the whole gospel, and the very vitals of Christianity: for they that have no sin, have no need of Christ, or of his satisfaction, or blood to cleanse them, nor of faith, repentance,* &c.

Answ. That the Lord God is able perfectly to redeem from sin in this life; that he can cast out the strong man, cleanse the house, and make it fit for himself to dwell in; that he can finish transgression and sin in the heart, and bring in everlasting righteousness; that he can tread down Satan under the feet of his saints, and make them more than conquerors over him; this they confess they steadily believe. But that every one that is turned to the light of the spirit of Christ in his heart, is presently advanced to this state, they never held forth; but that the way is long, the travel hard, the enemies and difficulties many, and that there is need of much faith, hope, patience, repentance, watchfulness against temptations, &c. before the life in them arrive at such a pitch. Yet for all this, saith Christ to his disciples, "Be ye "perfect;" directing them to aim at such a thing; and the apostle saith, "Let us go on unto perfection; and Christ gave a ministry "for the perfecting of "the saints:" and they do not doubt but that he that begins the work, can perfect it even in this life, and so deliver them out of the hands of sin, Satan, and all their spiritual enemies, as that they may serve God without fear of them any more, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of their lives.

Now how is this doctrine, or how is this people, because of their believing and holding forth this doctrine, guilty of all this great and heavy charge that is laid upon them here; as that *they have no need of Christ, his satisfaction, his blood, nor of faith, repentance, growing in grace, God's word and ordinances, nor of watchfulness and prayer,* &c? Let us consider the thing a little further.

First, The doctrine of perfection, if it should be granted to deny all this, yet it cannot be supposed

to deny the need thereof, until the ſtate of perfection be attained. Nay, they that truly believe that ſuch a ſtate is attainable, cannot deny the uſe of thoſe things which are proper to lead to that ſtate, but will conſcientiouſly apply themſelves thereto, and preſs all others thereto, who deſire to attain that ſtate. And they that have either heard them ſpeak, or read their writings with any equality of mind, may abundantly teſtify for them againſt the unrighteouſneſs and injury of this charge. Their life lies in Chriſt, their peace in his ſatisfaction for them, and in a ſenſible feeling of his blood ſprinkled in their conſciences, to cleanſe them from ſin; and by that faith, which is God's gift, they feel, and wait further to feel, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to them for juſtification. And as for being *perfectly juſt in themſelves*, it is a very unrighteous charge upon them; for their juſtice and righteouſneſs is in Chriſt for ever, and not of themſelves; but in the denial and crucifying of ſelf are they made partakers of it, which is beſtowed by the free grace, mercy, and power, of him who hath mercy on them, and not by any willing or running of theirs. And as for repentance, they feel the need of it, and find a godly ſorrow wrought in them, and a bitter mourning over him whom they once pierced, and ſtill pierce, ſo far as they hearken to the temper, and follow the motions and luſts of the tranſgreſſing nature. And they do both watch and pray againſt ſin, and feel what a bitter thing it is to have the watch ſo ſlackened, whereby the temptation prevails, which would lead to ſin. And as for *purifying themſelves daily*, and *putting off the old man*, and *putting on the new*; it is that which their hearts delight to be continually exerciſed about; and all this with an hope that it may be effected, that the veſſel may be made holy to the Lord, a fit ſpiritual temple for him to dwell in, that he may diſplay his life, glory, power, and pure preſence in them. But if the belief that this may be attained, in the way wherein God leadeth them towards it, and an hope to attain it, with

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an acknowledgment of it ſo far as it is attained; I ſay, if this make them guilty of ſo great a charge, then they are indeed guilty; for they cannot but believe it, wait for it, hope for it, and acknowledge it, ſo far as they feel it wrought in them. But how can this poſſibly make them guilty of denying theſe things, ſeeing the exerciſe of theſe things not only ſtandeth with, but is increaſed by, ſuch a belief and hope?

Secondly, The ſtate of perfection itſelf doth not exclude theſe things, in ſuch a way as this charge ſeems to intimate. For in the ſtate of perfection, the blood is not laid aſide as uſeleſs, but remains to keep pure for ever. It is *the blood of the everlaſting covenant*, Heb. xiii. 20. both the covenant and the blood laſt for ever, and are uſeful even to them that are perfect. And there is need and uſe of the faith in the blood, to believe the preſervation. As the covenant itſelf laſts; ſo that which lets into, and keeps in the covenant, laſts alſo. That which unites and ties the ſoul to Chriſt the life, abides in the ſoul for ever, even as the union itſelf abides. And there is a growing in the life, even where the heart is purified from ſin, even as Chriſt did grow and wax ſtrong in ſpirit; for a ſtate of perfection doth not exclude degrees. And ſo there is alſo a need of watching againſt temptations in a perfect ſtate; for *Adam* was perfect, and yet he needed a watch: and Chriſt was perfectly pure and without ſin, and yet he did both watch and pray. So that if any were brought to the perfect ſtate of a man, even unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt, which the miniſtry was given to bring all the ſaints unto, Epheſ. iv. 11, 12, 13. if any were taught and enabled ſo to walk in the light, as to be cleanſed by the blood from all ſin, and to have ſuch fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, as might make their joy full, 1 John i. 3, 4. 7. if any were brought to that ſtate of glory, as to be chaſte virgins, 2 Cor. xi. 2. without ſpot or wrinkle of the fleſh, but holy and without blemiſh, Epheſ. v. 27. if any ſhould be made perfect in every good work to

do his will, which was a thing the apoſtle prayed for, Heb. xiii. 21. if any ſhould have ſo put off the old man, and have put on the wedding garment, as to be made ready and fit to be married to the lamb, Rev. xix. 7. yet this would not exclude faith in the blood, or prayer, or watchfulneſs, to keep the garment pure, &c. nor growth in the life. And this we are not aſhamed to profeſs, that we are preſſing after, and ſome have already attained very far, even to be made perfect as pertaining to the conſcience; being ſo ingrafted into Chriſt the power of God, ſo planted into the likeneſs of his death and reſurrection, ſo encompaſſed with the walls and bulwarks of ſalvation, as that they feel no condemnation for ſin, but a continual juſtification of the life; being taught, led, and enabled to walk, not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit, Rom. viii. 1.

From what they have ſaid concerning this opinion of perfection (as they call it) they draw an argument againſt their other doctrines in theſe words. *Such fundamentals of Chriſtianity are overthrown by this one opinion of theirs, and how much more by all their other doctrines?*

Anſw. To which I ſhall ſay this: if their grounds and proofs againſt any other doctrines of the Quakers, be no more weighty and demonſtrative, than thoſe they have here brought forth againſt the doctrine of perfection, they may ſpare entertaining prejudices againſt them and condemning them; and in the firſt place weigh them in a more equal balance than they have done this. And I dare appeal to any naked and unbiaſſed ſpirit, who ſhall fairly conſider what is above written, whether the doctrine of perfection be ſuch an hideous error as they have repreſented it? Nay, whether it be not a precious truth of the goſpel of Chriſt, and a great encouragement to him who ſhall follow the command of Chriſt; who ſaith, "Be ye perfect;" to believe that (in the way of faith and obedience) he may be wrought up to ſuch an eſtate by the free-grace, mercy, love, and power

power of God? Yea, let me add this word more; he that feeleth the everlasting arm working one sin out of his heart, cannot but believe that the same arm can work out all, and pluck up every plant which the heavenly Father hath not planted; which hope and belief causeth him with joy to follow this arm through the regeneration. But if I did believe there were no perfecting the work of redemption in this life, but I must still in part be a slave to Satan, still crying out of the body of sin and death, and never have my heart purified for the Holy One to inhabit in, but remain in part unconverted, unchanged, unregenerated, unsanctified; oh! how heavily should I go on! I am sure it would be as a weight upon my spirit in resisting of sin and Satan. This is not the glad tidings of the everlasting gospel, but sad news from the borders of death, which would keep the creature not only in the bonds of death, but without hope of deliverance in this life; and refer the hope to that day wherein there is no more working out of redemption, but the eternal judgment of the tree as it falls.

Now, having after this manner proved that the doctrines of the Quakers are destructive to the fundamental truths of religion, they lay down their argument whereupon they conclude that it is lawful for them, nay, their duty, to put them to death, in these words. "Now the commandment of God is plain, that he "that presumes to speak lies in the name of the Lord, "and turns people out of the way which the Lord "hath commanded to walk in, such an one must not "live, but be put to death," Zech. xiii. 3. Deut. xiii. 6. 18. 20.

Answ. 1. By what hath been said against them, it is not manifest that they have spoken lies in the name of the Lord. Nay, if they themselves, who thus charge them, could but soberly and mildly, with a Christian spirit, weigh the thing, would it not rather appear, that they in thus falsly charging them, and managing such untrue and unrighteous arguments against them, have spoken lies, both concerning them,

and againſt the Lord and his truth? And as for turning men out of the way, that cannot be juſtly charged on them, who turn men to Chriſt the living way, and deliver the ſame meſſage the apoſtles did, that "God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all;" and who point them to that place where God hath ſaid this light is to be found, which is the heart, where God writes the new covenant, and the laws thereof, Heb. viii. where the word of faith is nigh, Rom. x. Surely they that direct hither, do not turn men out of the way. But they that point men to gueſs at the meanings of ſcriptures, and to gather knowledge, and form rules to themſelves out of them, by their own natural wit and underſtanding, which can never reach the myſteries of the kingdom of God, and which God hides the true knowledge of the ſcriptures from, theſe are thoſe that turn men out of the way. For they that rightly underſtand the ſcriptures, muſt firſt receive a meaſure of the ſpirit to underſtand it with; even as they that wrote any part thereof, did firſt receive a meaſure of the ſpirit to write it by.

2. It is not manifeſt by theſe places quoted, that the governors of New-England have received authority from the Lord to put the Quakers to death, if their doctrines were ſuch as they accuſe them to be. That of Deut. xiii. 6. is a manifeſt caſe concerning one that ſhould tempt to the following of other gods, of the gods of the people round about, nigh or far off; in ſuch a caſe the offender was to be ſtoned to death, ver. 10. but is this applicable to caſes of doctrine? That of Deut. xviii. 20. gives a clear note how the prophet may be known that ſpeaks a lie in the name of the Lord, and what kind of lie it is, for which he is to be put to death, ver. 22. but it doth not ſay that every man in the commonwealth of Iſrael, that holdeth any doctrine contrary to what ſome of them might call the fundamental doctrines of the law, ſhould be put to death. That of Zech. xiii. 3. is a prophecy, not a command, and is not to

to be underſtood in man's wiſdom, nor to be fulfilled in man's will. It were better to wait for the true openings of prophecies in the ſpirit, than to let the carnal part looſe, to gather ſomewhat out of them for the ſatisfying of the fleſh, and making its thirſt after the blood of God's lambs appear more plauſible. I would but put this queſtion to your conſciences in the ſight of God; whether in a conſcientious ſubmiſſion to the will of God in this ſcripture ye put them to death; or whether from this ſcripture ye ſeek a ſhelter and cover for the thing, having already done it, or fully purpoſed to do it?

So that the caſe is not here the ſame with any of the caſes mentioned in thoſe ſcriptures: for if ſome of their doctrines were lies (which ye have been very far from proving), yet it was not for ſuch kind of lies that death was appointed in the commonwealth of Iſrael. And yet there is a large difference between what was lawful to be done in the kingdom or commonwealth of Iſrael, and what is now lawful to be done. The kingdom or commonwealth of Iſrael was a ſtate outwardly repreſentative of what was inwardly to be done in the ſtate of the goſpel, by Chriſt the king thereof. He is the king and law-giver to his people, and he is their judge concerning their receiving or rejecting them; concerning their obeying or diſobeying them; concerning their holding the faith, or their letting go the faith; and maintaining things contrary thereto. And he doth judge his people here in this life, ſo far as he thinks fit, Heb. x. 30, 31. reſerving alſo what he thinks fit for another time of judgment, Acts xvii. 31. And who is he that ſhall take his office out of his hand, and judge one of his ſervants in the things of his kingdom? Rom. xiv. 4. Is not this an intruding into Chriſt's kingly office? He gave authority to, and command for, the doing of ſuch things outwardly before his coming, as might repreſent what he would do inwardly after his coming; but where hath he given authority ſince his coming, to do ſuch things any more? Doth not the typical

typical king, with his typical government, ceaſe, after that king, with his government which is figured out, is come?

O governors of New-England! to take away the life of a man is a weighty thing; and the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs, who either doth it in a violent manner, or who maketh an unjuſt law to do it by. But "how precious in the ſight of the Lord is the "death of his ſaints!" oh! how will ye be able to bear the weight of their blood, when the Lord maketh inquiſition for it! Ye had need have a very clear warrant in this caſe. Oh! how will ye anſwer this thing at the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt! Alas! ſuch arguments as theſe will ſtand you in little ſtead: but ye have done it, and now muſt maintain it; and it is exceeding hard for you (being thus deeply engaged in the ſight of the nations) to come to a ſober and ſerious conſideration of the ſtate of the caſe, as it ſtands before the Lord.

2. The ſecond ground or conſideration which they hold forth to clear their law of baniſhment and death againſt the QUAKERS to be warrantable and juſt, is this: *Becauſe they are far from giving that honour and reverence to magiſtrates which the Lord requireth, and good men have given to them; but, on the contrary, ſhew contempt againſt them in their very outward geſture and behaviour; and ſome of them at leaſt ſpare not to belch railing and curſing ſpeeches*, &c.

Anſw. That we do not give that honour and reverence to magiſtrates, which the Lord requireth, deſerves a weighty proof. For what we do or forbear in this kind, we do as in the ſight of the Lord; as perſons who are not only liable to ſuffer from men, but alſo to give an account to HIM at the laſt day. Now towards magiſtrates our carriage is thus, as in the preſence of the Lord.

1. We obſerve their commands in all things that are according to God. We ſubmit ourſelves to the government that is ſupreme, and to the governors under the ſupreme, for the Lord's ſake, who in their ſeveral

ſeveral places ought to be for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well, according to 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. This is God's ordinance, and here magiſtracy is in its right place, namely, in puniſhing the evil-doer for his evil deeds; but not make a man an offender for a word, or for a geſture, which is neither good nor evil in itſelf, but as it is done. He that pulleth off his hat, or boweth in flattery, or to pleaſe man, in him it is evil: he that forbeareth to do it in obedience to God, and in the fear of his name, in him it is good.

2. When any magiſtrates puniſh us for well-doing, for our obedience to the Lord's ſpirit, though we know God never gave power to any magiſtracy to puniſh therefore; yet we patiently ſuffer under them; referring our cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly, and waiting on him for ſtrength to carry us through our ſufferings for his name's ſake.

3. When we appear before them, we appear as in the Lord's preſence, deſiring his guidance, that we may give due honour and reſpect to all that is of him in them; and may be kept from honouring or pleaſing that which is not of him, and which he would not have us honour. This is the temper of our ſpirits, and accordingly is our carriage as in the ſight of the Lord, whatever men deem of us.

But the great matter is, becauſe we do not pull off our hats, and bow to them, or that we uſe plain language to them (as thou and thee to a particular perſon), which ſome of them will needs interpret to be contempt; though others of them, who are more ſober and conſiderate, can clearly diſcern that it is not at all in contempt either to their authority, or their perſons; but in a mere ſingle-hearted obedience to God. Now to drive this a little towards a fair trial, conſider in meekneſs, and in God's fear,

1. What kind of honour this is which is thus much ſtood upon? Is it the honour which is from above, or the honour which is from below? What part ſprings it from in man; from the new-birth, or from the earthly

earthly nature? And what doth it pleaſe in man? Doth it pleaſe that which is begotten of God? Doth it pleaſe the meekneſs, the humility, the lowlineſs, the new nature? Or doth it pleaſe and help to keep up the old nature, the lofty ſpirit, even that part which is prone in every man to be exalted out of the fear of God? For this I may freely ſay, that whatſoever is of the earth, hath an aptneſs in it to feed the earthly part; and particularly this of outward bowing to the creature, is apt to hurt him that receiveth it. In man's giving and receiving honour, God hath been forgotten. They have forgotten God, who have been giving honour to one another; and they have forgotten God, who have been receiving honour from one another. And what if the Lord, who hath made us ſenſible of the evil herein, hath laid a reſtraint upon us? Can any forbid the Lord from laying ſuch a thing upon us? Or is it lawful for any to go about to hinder us from obeying the Lord therein? Thou who art thus eager in contending for honour, art thou ſure it is not the evil part in thee which doth deſire it? If it be the good part in thee, thou wilt deſire it in meekneſs and gentleneſs; yea, and wilt be able to bear the want of it with joy, where it is denied thee upon ſuch an account, that it may run more purely towards the Lord.

Now if it be earthly honour, it is of a periſhing nature: it is not always to laſt; but is one of the faſhions of this world which is to paſs away (how long a time ſoever it hath had); and God may call his people from it at his pleaſure; and if he call from it, they muſt leave it off, though the earthly nature and power be never ſo angry thereat. The Lord hath let men have a long day, wherein man hath been lifted up, and appeared great, by receiving that honour which is of the earth, not of the faith: but at length the Lord will bring forth his day, wherein he will be great, and have every knee bow to him, and every tongue confeſs to him: and then man ſhall be little,

and

and his honour fall, and the Lord alone be exalted, Isa. ii. 17.

2. Doth not the image of God grow up into the likeness of God? Doth God respect mens persons? Did Christ regard any man's person? Did not James say, "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, "and are convinced of the law, as transgressors?" James ii. 9. Of what law? Of the law of faith, which exalteth the new-birth, and layeth flat the creature in its transgressing nature, estate, and honour. For saith Christ, who received not honour from men, nor gave honour to men, "How can ye believe, which receive "honour one of another?" John v. 44. That which receiveth earthly honour, is of the earth, and cannot believe; and that which giveth earthly honour, is of the earth, and so not of the faith. The faith is a denying of the earth, a taking up of the cross to the earthly honour, which is as a block in the way of faith. How can ye believe, when ye cherish that part in you which is against the faith? The immortal seed of life, in the day of the gospel, grows up out of the earth, leaving it, with its customs, fashions, honours, and its nature and worship too, behind it.

So that look into the ground of the thing with the eye which seeth over the transgressing state, and over all things which have sprung up from the transgressing part, and which please that part which is out of the faith, out of the life and power, drawn from God into the earth, and it will be manifest that earthly honour hath its root, foundation, and service there; but falleth off like a shackle from man's spirit, as the life riseth in him, and as he is redeemed out of the earth.

Now as for Abraham's and Jacob's bowings, &c. those things had their season under the law (which made nothing perfect), as other things had; but now God calleth every man to bow to the Son, and will not permit so much as a bowing to an angel, who is far more honourable than any magistrate. And the Son calleth to honour the Father, and to seek the honour

honour which cometh from God only: and he that will be his disciple, must take up his cross to the earthly part, and follow him, who neither gave earthly honour, nor received earthly honour, but condemned it, John v. 44. Therefore let men consider the ground of the thing, and the different state between Jews under the law, and Christians under the gospel; and not think the bringing of instances from them of old time can excuse us from following Christ according to the law of faith, who gave us this pattern of not receiving or giving honour to mens persons; and let not the weight of our plea (it having so great impression on our hearts) be despised by any that pretend relation to our Lord and master, which I shall briefly thus recite.

1. It is the single and sincere desire of our hearts to give all the honour and obedience to magistrates, which is due unto them according to the scriptures.

2. It is manifest that we are careful of observing all just laws; and patient in suffering through unjust laws, or where the magistrate doth persecute us without or against law.

3. This kind of honour of pulling off the hat, and bowing to the person, we do not find commanded in scripture; but we find Christ's command against it, who saith, "Follow me;" who both denied to receive it, and did not give it; but condemned it. And we find its rise to be from the earthly part, and to the earthly part it is given; which it pleaseth, being given to it; or is offended at being denied it: and this part we are taught by the Lord to crucify in ourselves, and not to cherish in others.

4. The bowing of persons under the law (which was an earthly state, wherein many things were permitted, which are not permitted under the gospel) doth not bind Christians under the gospel; nor doth not limit the spirit of God from taking of any one or more, or all of his people, from giving that which the earthly part calleth honour, to that which is of the earth.

5. We

5. We do appeal to the Lord our God (who is our judge and law-giver) that he hath laid this upon our ſpirits; and hath ſmitten ſeveral of us, when there hath riſen ſo much as a deſire in us to pleaſe men in this particular: and in the fear of his name, and in obedience to him, we do forbear it; and not either in contempt of authority, or of the perſons in authority.

6. We find, by much experience, that the forbearing of this is a ſervice to our Lord and maſter, and an hurt to his enemy. It offendeth the paſſionate, it offendeth the rough, it offendeth the proud and lofty; that ſpirit is ſoon touched and ſtirred by it: but that which is low, that which is meek, that which is humble, that which is gentle, that is eaſily drawn from valuing and minding of it, and findeth an advantage therein. And of a truth the earthly ſpirit knows, and feels, that God is taking the honour from it, and giving it to the meek and humble; which makes it muſter up its forces and arguments to hold it as long as it can.

Now what moderate man (much more any Chriſtian) could not forego the putting off of an hat, or the bowing of a knee, upon ſo ſolemn and weighty an account as this. If this were thine own caſe, wouldſt thou be forced, impriſoned, fined, or have this made an argument againſt thee to baniſh thee, or put thee to death? Thou doſt not know how the Lord may viſit thee by his ſpirit, and what he may require of thee. He may call thee alſo to give forth thy teſtimony (and to fight under the banner of his ſpirit) againſt all the faſhions, cuſtoms, honours, yea, and worſhips of this world. That which is born of God, is not of this world: and as it groweth up in any earthen veſſel, ſo it draweth the veſſel alſo more and more out of this world. "Ye are not of the "world," (but called out of the world), "therefore "the world hates you." That which can pleaſe the world, that which can bow to it and honour it, that the world loves; but the immortal ſeed which cannot bow,

bow, but teſtifies againſt the world's honours, that they are not of the Father, but of the world, this ſeed the world hates, and the veſſels in whom it bubbles up, and through whom it giveth forth its teſtimony againſt the world.

Object. *But in the New Teſtament Luke ſtiles Theophilus moſt excellent; and Paul, ſpeaking to Feſtus, ſaid, Moſt noble Feſtus; which are terms or expreſſions of honour and reverence.*

Anſw. Chriſt did promiſe his diſciples and miniſters that he would be with them, and give them what to ſay. Now if nobility and true excellency did appear in any perſons, and he led them by his ſpirit to acknowledge it, this is no ſufficient warrant for men to do the like in their own wills; or to give ſuch titles to perſons being in authority, whether they be ſuch perſons or no. Luke knew Theophilus to be excellent, and he was led by the ſpirit of God to ſtile him excellent; for by the ſpirit of God he wrote the ſcripture, Luke i. 3. wherein he ſo ſtiles him. And for Feſtus, he that ſhall ſtrictly obſerve his carriage, will find it to be very noble, in that he would not be won by the importunity and informations of the high-prieſt and chief of the Jews, and of the multitude alſo, againſt Paul, but applied himſelf to an upright conſideration of the cauſe, Acts xxv. 2. 24. to the end. The ſame ſpirit which ſhewed the unworthy carriage and ignobleneſs of the high-prieſt and zealous profeſſing Jews, might move Paul to ſet this mark of honour upon Feſtus. The Lord loveth truth in the heart, and truth in words, and the following of the guidance of his ſpirit into truth: but to give a man high titles, merely becauſe he is great and high in the outward, without diſcerning that he is ſuch, and without the leading of God's ſpirit ſo to do, this is of the fleſh, according to the will of the fleſh, out of the faith, and not according to truth and righteouſneſs: and in the fear of the Lord there is a watch ſet over our ſpirits in theſe things, leſt we ſhould eſteem and honour men according to the will

will of the flesh, and not in the Lord. Titles of office, or of relations, as master, father, &c. we find freedom to give; but titles which tend towards flattery, or exalting man out of his place, and the lifting up of his heart above his brethren, we have not freedom in the Lord to use. And Elihu also found a restraint upon him in this respect, Job xxxii. 21, 22.

Object. *It is noted as a brand and reproach of false teachers, that they despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities,* 2 Pet. ii. 10. *and* Jude ver. 8. *Now it is well known that the practice of the* QUAKERS *is but too like those false teachers,* &c.

Answ. It were worth a narrow search and inquiry what the dominion and dignities (or glories) are, which the false teachers speak evil of, or blaspheme, &c. Search the scriptures: where do ye find the false teachers speaking evil of earthly authorities? Nay, they still cling close to them, exalt them, get them on their side, and cry them up, and will be sure enough never to fail in pleasing the magistrate with cringing and bowing, or any thing of that nature. But there is the dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ in the heart; there is the rule of his spirit over the fleshly part; and there is the truth in the inner man; there are spiritual dignities (or glories); these the false teachers, in all ages, did despise, and were not afraid to speak evil of; though they should have feared to speak evil of the movings, and guidings, and lowest appearings of the spirit of God (which excel in nature and worth the greatest earthly dignities); yet they have not; but have blasphemed the holy life and appearances of God in his people: nay, they have not spared his more eminent breakings-forth in his very prophets, holy apostles, or Christ himself. Mark what they speak evil of; they speak evil of "the "things they know not," ver. 10. What were the things they knew not? The inward movings and virtue of his spirit; the inward power, life, glory, and dominion of truth in the heart, they knew not: it was against Christ in his people their evil deeds and

hard ſpeeches were, ver. 15. But as for the high and great-ones, the dominions and dignities of the earth, they knew them well enough, and did not ſpeak evil of them; but had their perſons in admiration, becauſe of the advantage they had by them, ver. 16. They have always had a double advantage from theſe, both of gain to themſelves, and of overbearing the lambs of Chriſt by their great ſwelling words. The Lord hath ſtill ſo ordered it in his wiſdom, both before the coming of Chriſt, at his coming, and ſince, that the falſe prophets and teachers ſhould ſtill have the advantage of the outward authorities, and his people be a poor, afflicted, deſpiſed, perſecuted remnant, whoſe glory is inward, and cannot be diſcerned by the outward eye, no not of God's Iſrael. See the dignities particularly expreſſed, Rev. xiii. 6. *The name of God*, his holy power in his people: *the tabernacle*, which is ſanctified and made honourable for him by his ſpirit; *them that dwell in heaven*, who are redeemed out of the earth, and have their converſation above: theſe are dignities which the earthly authorities, nay, the falſe teachers themſelves, never knew the worth of, and ſo they are not afraid to blaſpheme them. The firſt beaſt on which the falſe church rode, with the ſecond beaſt, which are of the very race of theſe falſe teachers, making an image to the firſt beaſt, becauſe of advantage, all join together in blaſpheming theſe dignities, Rev. xiii. and chap. xvii.

To open this a little further; John ſaid in his days, that it was then the laſt time: for there were many antichriſts then come, 1 John ii. 18. From whence came they? "They went out from us," ſaith he; "but they were not of us," ver. 19. "They were "ſenſual; they had not the ſpirit" and ſo could not abide the preſence, life, judgment, and power of the ſpirit; but "ſeparated themſelves," Jude ver. 19. But whither went they, when they went out from the true church? Why they went out into the world, 1 John iv. 2. They got the form of godlineſs, which would

would ſtand well enough with the luſts and eaſe of the fleſh, and went and preached up that in the world. And now ſpeaking the things of God in the worldly ſpirit, the world could hear them, ver. 5. Thus having got a great party into the form of truth, now they blaſpheme the power; now they mock at the movings of the ſpirit, the leadings of the ſpirit, the living name, the true tabernacle, the true inhabitants of heaven, who have their converſation above in the heavenly nature, in the heavenly principle, in the pure ſpirit of life (for as they are begotten by the ſpirit, ſo they live in the ſpirit, and walk in the ſpirit). This the falſe teachers (who have got the form of doctrine and the form of diſcipline, holding it in the fleſhly wiſdom, where they may hold their luſts too) mock at and blaſpheme, Jude, ver. 18. And this hath been the great way of deceit ſince the apoſtaſy; God gathered a ſeparated people from the world; the falſe teachers get the form of godlineſs from them, and ſet it up in the world, and then turn againſt the power, and deny it, ſpeaking evil of, or blaſpheming the ſpirit, which is the dominion, and his miniſtrations (in the ſpirits of his people), which are the dignities or glories of the New Teſtament, which excel all earthly dignities, and alſo the miniſtration of the firſt covenant, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8.

So likewiſe for *railing ſpeeches*. The falſe prophets can ſpeak ſmooth words; ſpeaking in the fleſhly wiſdom, they can pleaſe the fleſhly part in their very reproofs; but he that ſpeaks from God, muſt ſpeak his words, how harſh ſoever they ſeem to the fleſhly part. And he that ſpeaks in his name, ſpirit, majeſty, and authority, is exalted high above the conſideration of the perſon to whom he ſpeaks. What is a prince, a magiſtrate, a ruler, before the Lord, but clay, or duſt and aſhes? If the Lord bid any of his ſervants call that, which was once the faithful city, harlot; and ſay, concerning her princes, that they are rebellious, and companions of thieves, Iſai. i. 21. 23. what is the poor earthen veſſel, that it ſhould go to

change or mollify this ſpeech? And ſo for the falſe prophets and teachers: if the ſpirit of the Lord (in the meaneſt of his ſervants) call them idol ſhepherds, hirelings, thieves, robbers, dogs, dumb dogs, greedy dumb dogs, that cannot bark (though they can ſpeak ſmooth pleaſing words enough to fleſhly Iſrael, and the earthly great-ones), generation of vipers, hypocrites, whited ſepulchres, graves that appear not, &c. who may reprove him for it, or find fault with the inſtrument he chuſes? Now man, judging by the fleſhly wiſdom, may venture to call this railing; and the prophets of the Lord have been accounted rude, and mad, and troublers of Iſrael; and ſo it is at this day: but the Lord, being angry with the tranſgreſſor, may ſend a rough rebuke to him, by what meſſenger he pleaſeth; and what is the poor creature that he ſhould gainſay his maker, and deſire the meſſage might be ſmoother? But now theſe falſe teachers, who can ſpeak ſmoothly to the fleſhly part, flatter the great-ones, and the profeſſors which fall in with their form of doctrine and diſcipline, they deny the power, and blaſpheme the movings and goings-forth of the ſpirit of God in his people; and if any be drawn by the ſpirit to ſeparate from their formal way, and to ſeek after the life and preſence of the power, him they cry out of as a ſectary, a blaſphemer, an heretick; and ſo bring railing accuſations againſt that life and ſpirit by which he is drawn, and of him for following the drawings of it: and thus they become guilty of ſpeaking evil of what they know not, Jude 10. They that are drawn out of the world's worſhips, know from what they were drawn; but they that remain ſtill in them, do not know the power which drew out of them, nor into what it drew; but looking on it with a carnal eye, it appears mean to them, and ſo they readily diſdain it, and think they may ſafely ſpeak evil of it, though in truth they know it not.

And as for *curſings*; there are children of the curſe, as well as of the bleſſing: and the ſpirit of the Lord may pronounce his curſe againſt any children of the curſe

curſe by whom he pleaſes. Curſe ye Meroz: curſe ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, Judges v. 23. And yet Meroz did not perſecute, but only not come to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty. So the profeſſing Jews, with their rulers and teachers, were curſed by the ſpirit of the Lord, Pſ. lxix. 22. &c. So Judas was curſed, Pſ. cix. 6. &c. For Peter applieth it to him, Acts i. 20. Now if the curſe be cauſeleſs, it ſhall not come, Prov. xxvi. 2. And well will it be with him whom men cauſeleſly curſe, Mat. v. 11. Although they were the higheſt, devouteſt, and moſt zealous profeſſing Jews, with their prieſts and rulers in thoſe days; and although they ſhould be the higheſt, moſt zealous, and devout formal Chriſtians, with their rulers and teachers in theſe days, who may have got this form, as well as they got that form, and yet hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs, and deny the power, as falſe teachers formerly did, who held the form, 2 Tim. iii. 5. But the caſe of Shimei is not at all proper to the thing in hand, becauſe he did not pretend to curſe in the Lord's name and authority; but, manifeſtly out of the fear of God, curſed the Lord's anointed in his low ſtate. Neither were theſe two QUAKERS put to death for curſing. So that if Humphry Norton were never ſo blameable, yet that reacheth not to them, but is to be reckoned to him that did it, who is to ſtand or fall to his own maſter therein. Yet this I may ſay, becauſe it is ſo extraordinary a caſe (we having not known the like) that if he had not the Lord's clear warrant for what he did, ſurely the Lord will ſeverely judge him, for ſpeaking ſo peremptorily and preſumptuouſly in his name, if not required by him.

And ſo as touching *contemptuous carriage*. When there is not contempt in the heart, it is not eaſy to ſhew contemptuous carriage; but the fleſhly part miſſing of the honour which is pleaſing to it, and being offended thereby, is ready to apprehend that to be ſpoken and done in contempt, which is ſpoken and done in the humility and fear of the Lord.

3. A third ground or consideration to justify their law of banishment and death of the QUAKERS, is drawn from *Solomon's confining of Shimei, and of putting him to death for breach of his confinement*; whereupon they argue, that *if execution of death be lawful upon breach of confinement, may not the same be said for breach of banishment; banishment being not so strait, but giving more liberty than confinement?*

Answ. The question is not whether the magistrate upon no occasion may banish upon pain of death; but whether the banishment of the QUAKERS, upon pain of death, was just or no? If it were ever so manifest that a magistrate might banish, and put to death in case of not observing his law of banishment; yet that doth not prove that every law of banishment is just, and that the death of such as do not obey their law is just also. He may make a law in his own self-will, pride, passion, resolvedness, and stiffness of spirit, and so draw the sufferings of persons under that law (either of banishment or death) upon his own head. Now the QUAKERS coming in the name of the Lord, by his commission, and upon his work (whom all the magistrates of the earth are to reverence and bow before), if magistrates will presume to make a law to banish them upon pain of death; yet if the Lord require them either to stay or return, they know whom to fear and obey, which delivers them from the fear of them who can only torture and kill the body: and they had rather die in obedience to the Lord, than feel the weight of his hand upon their souls for their disobedience. It is not in this case as it is in ordinary banishment upon civil accounts, where it is in mens will and power to abstain from the place from which they are banished; but they must fulfil the will of their Lord, not at all regarding what befals them therein.

4. The fourth ground or consideration to justify their law of banishment and death against the QUAKERS, is drawn from *the right and propriety which every man hath in his own house and land, and from the unreasonableness*

ſonableneſs and injurioufneſs of another's intruding and entering into it, having no authority thereto; yea, and when the owner doth expreſly prohibit and forbid the ſame. And that if any preſume to enter thus, without legal authority, he might juſtly be impleaded as a thief or uſurper; and if in caſe of violent aſſault he ſhould be killed, his blood would be upon his own head. Whereupon it is argued thus: that *if private perſons may in ſuch a caſe ſhed the blood of ſuch intruder, may not the like be granted to them that are the publick keepers and guardians of the commonwealth? Have not they as much power to take away the lives of ſuch, as, contrary to prohibition, ſhall invade or intrude into their publick poſſeſſions or territories?* And that the QUAKERS do thus invade and intrude without authority, they argue thus: *For who can believe that* QUAKERS *are conſtables, to intrude themſelves, invade, and enter, whether the colony will or no, yea, contrary to their expreſs prohibition? If in ſuch violent and bold attempts they loſe their lives, they may thank themſelves, as the blameable cauſe, and authors of their own death.*

Anſw. It is no invaſion, nor intruſion, for any meſſengers and ſervants of the Lord to enter into any part of his earth at his command, upon his errand, and about his work. And if any ſhould be ſo ſent to the houſe of a particular perſon, to deliver a meſſage from the Lord, and the owner of the houſe, inſtead of hearing and conſidering his meſſage in meekneſs and fear, whether it were of God or no, ſhould be rough and violent with him, and command him off before he had delivered his meſſage, and either upon his not immediately going off, or his return with another meſſage (for the Lord, if he pleaſe, may ſend him again) ſhould fall upon him and kill him; upon whoſe head would this man's blood light?

2. If men will needs have it go for an invaſion, it is an invaſion of a ſpiritual nature, and the defence from it cannot be by carnal weapons. Killing of mens perſons, is not the way to ſuppreſs either truth or error. How have the Papiſts been able to defend their kingdom, or ſuppreſs the truth by their bloody

weapons? They may prevail in their territories againſt mens perſons for a ſeaſon, but the truth will have a time of dominion, and will in the mean time be getting ground in mens minds and conſciences, by the ſufferings of the witneſſes to it. Nay, my friends, if ye will defend yourſelves from this invaſion, ye muſt get better weapons.

3. Is this your rule concerning any that ſhall come in the name of the Lord; that if they be not conſtables, or other earthly officers, ye will baniſh them, and put them to death? Is the Lord of heaven and earth limited to ſend none but conſtables among you? Well! ye may judge by your law while your day laſts; but the Lord in his day will clear his ſervants and meſſengers, though they have not been conſtables, and lay it upon the head of them who have unrighteouſly ſhed it.

5. The fifth ground or conſideration, whereby they juſtify their law of baniſhment and death againſt the Quakers, is this. *Corruption of mind and judgment is a great infection and defilement, and it is the Lord's command that ſuch corrupt perſons be not received into the houſe; which plainly enough implies that the houſholder hath power enough to keep them out, and that it was not in their power to come, if they pleaſed, whether the houſholder would or no. And if the father of the family muſt keep them out of his houſe, the father of the commonwealth muſt keep them out of his juriſdiction (they being nurſing fathers and nurſing mothers by the account of God). So that what an houſholder may do againſt perſons that are infected with the plague or peſtilence (who may kill them, if otherwiſe he cannot keep them out of his houſe), a magiſtrate may do the like for his ſubjects. And if ſheep and lambs cannot be preſerved from the danger of wolves, but the wolves will break in amongſt them, it is eaſy to ſee what the ſhepherd or keeper of the ſheep may lawfully do in ſuch a caſe.*

Anſw. It is granted, that the corruption of the mind and judgment is defiling and infectious; and therefore every heart that knows the preciouſneſs of truth,

truth, is to wait on the Lord in his fear, in the uſe of thoſe means which he hath appointed for preſervation from it; but that killing the perſons is one of the means God hath appointed, this is ſtill the thing in controverſy, and is ſtill denied to be either proper in itſelf, or ſanctified by God to this end. The apoſtle ſays, "There muſt be hereticks, that they which are "approved may be made manifeſt," 1 Cor. xi. 19. but he doth not ſay, hereafter, when there are Chriſtian magiſtrates, they muſt baniſh or cut off the hereticks, as faſt as they ſpring up; but God hath uſe of theſe things for the exerciſing of the ſpirits of his people, and the truth gains by overcoming them in the faith and power of the ſpirit. And ſo, as touching wolves, the apoſtle Paul called the elders of the church of Epheſus, and told them, that "after "his departure, grievous wolves ſhould enter in a-"mong them, not ſparing the flock," Acts xx. 28, 29.—31. The Lord hath put into the hands of his ſhepherd a ſword, which will pierce to the heart of the wolf; he ſtanding faithful in the power of God, in the life of righteouſneſs, need not fear any wolf; but by the power of the ſpirit, and preſence of the truth, ſhall be able to preſerve the conſciences of his flock pure to God. What kind of ſhepherd is he, that cannot defend his flock without the magiſtrate's ſword? But take away that, the wolf breaks in, and preys upon his ſheep. Surely the true ſhepherd, who knows the virtue of the ſword God hath put into his hand, will never call to the magiſtrate for his ſword of another nature, which cannot touch the wolf, the heretick, the ſeducer, but only fleſh and blood, with which the miniſters of Chriſt never wreſtled nor fought. And this is not the way to preſerve the hearts and conſciences of the flock (it may perhaps ſtrike terror into the fleſhly nature); but their conſciences are ſo much the more apt to be wrought upon by the doctrines, patience, and ſuffering of thoſe who are thus dealt with. The magiſtrate's ſword being thus uſed, doth not at all preſerve that which

which is tender, but hurts it, diſengages it, ſtirs up a witneſs in it againſt thoſe that thus go about to defend that which they call truth, that build up their Jeruſalem with blood, and govern their flock with force, affrighting them from that which they call error, and affrighting them into that which they call truth, with an outward ſword; whereas the true temple is built in peace, governed in peace, maintained in peace, defended by peace; and error and hereticks diſpelled by the power of the ſpirit, manifeſting the deceit to the conſcience; and not by the ſword of the magiſtrate, dealing with them as with worldly malefactors. Now this I ſay as before the Lord; the true ſhepherd, who hath received the ſword of the ſpirit, and hath tried the virtue of it, cannot diſtruſt it, cannot deſire the magiſtrate's help by outward force againſt errors or hereſies; he that looketh upon it as inſufficient, and calleth to the magiſtrate for his ſword, plainly diſcovers that he hath not received, or knoweth not the virtue of the true one, and diſhonoureth both his maſter's work and weapon.

For that place of 2 John, ver. 10. It is one thing for man not to receive a man into his houſe, and another thing for him to kill that perſon who offers to come againſt his will. Do ye believe in your hearts, that the apoſtles intent was to direct the Chriſtians to whom he wrote, to keep them out by violence, and to kill them if they could not otherwiſe keep them out? Though the parellel is not proper; for God hath often ſent his ſervants into countries, cities, and places of reſort, againſt the will of the rulers, prieſts, and falſe prophets, but never to break violently into any man's houſe.

The magiſtrate keeping in his place, cannot but be a *nurſing father to the church*; for let him draw out his ſword againſt that wickedneſs which is proper for him to cut down, it will exceedingly help to nurſe up the church; but where hath the magiſtrate commiſſion to meddle with any of the ſpiritual ſhepherd's work? Nay, his ſword was never appointed to cut down errors,

rors, or hereſies, or hereticks; but the ſword of the ſpirit, in the hand of the ſpiritual ſhepherd. God hath ſet up an hedge between theſe two powers, which he that breaketh down layeth both waſte as to their true uſe, virtue, and order; and this antichriſt hath long done in many appearances. The bringing of theſe two to rights, ſetting each in its proper place, will give ſuch a wound to his kingdom, as he will not be able to recover. And mark this by the way; antichriſt hath all along made uſe of the magiſtrate's ſword to ſlay the lambs, under the name of hereticks, ſectaries, wolves, blaſphemers; but Chriſt comes with the ſpirit of his mouth to ſlay antichriſt, 2 Theſ. ii. 8. That is the ſword all the hereticks, ſeducers, and falſe prophets were ſlain with in the apoſtles days before the apoſtaſy; and that is the ſword that antichriſt (who hath made uſe of the other ſword againſt Chriſt all along the apoſtaſy) ſhall be ſlain with after the apoſtaſy. When Chriſt comes to fight againſt antichriſt (who hath cruelly torn, rent and butchered his people under the name of wolves) he will take his own ſword, which is the word of his mouth. That did the work at firſt; that muſt do the work again. But in the midſt, between theſe two ſeaſons, there hath been bad work made with the magiſtrate's ſword; the witneſſes, upon every appearance and breaking forth of God's truth in them, having been liable to feel the ſmart of it.

6. Their ſixth and laſt ground and conſideration, whereby they juſtify their law of baniſhment and death againſt the Quakers, is this. *It was the commandment of the Lord Jeſus unto his diſciples, that when they were perſecuted in one city, they ſhould flee unto another; and accordingly it was his own practice, and the practice of the ſaints, who, when they have been perſecuted, have fled away for their own ſafety.*

This (they ſay) *reaſon requires, that when men have liberty unto it, they ſhould not refuſe ſo to do; becauſe otherwiſe they will be guilty of tempting God, and of incurring their own hurt, as having a fair way open for the*

the avoiding thereof, but they needlesly expose themselves thereto. Whereupon they argue thus.

If therefore that which is done against the Quakers were indeed persecution, what spirit may they be thought to be acted and led by, who are in their actings so contrary to the commandment and example of Christ and his saints in the case of persecution, which these men suppose to be their case? Plain enough it is, that if their case were the same, their actings are not the same, but quite contrary. So that Christ and his saints were led by one spirit, and these people by another: for rather than they would not shew their contempt of authority, and make disturbance amongst his people, they chuse to go contrary to the express direction of Jesus Christ, and the approved example of his saints, to the hazard and peril of their own lives.

Answ. Afflictions, tribulations, trials, persecutions are not to be fled from, but to be borne and passed through to the kingdom, into which the entrance is through many of these, Acts xiv. 22. and Christ saith, "he that will be his disciple, must take up his cross "daily, and follow him," Luke ix. 23. Now persecution for Christ is part of the cross, which the disciple must not run away from, but take up, and follow Christ with. Yea, the apostle is very express, 2 Tim. iii. 12. "Yea, and all that will live godly in "Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." It is the portion of all, and all must bear it. The world hateth and persecuteth (in some degree or other) all that are not of the world; and all must be content with their daily portion thereof, waiting on God for strength to bear the cross, not flying it; and the apostle commends the Hebrews for "enduring the great fight of "afflictions," Heb. x. 32, 33, 34. The Jews were zealous for the law and ordinances of Moses, and grievous persecutions of the Christians (especially of such as had been of them before): now the Christians are commended for standing the shock, for bearing the brunt, for not fearing the loss of name, goods, life, or any thing, but eyeing the heavenly treasure. So Christ, warning of persecution, bids the church

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to "fear none of thoſe things which ſhe ſhould ſuf-
"fer," but "be faithful unto the death:" and he that thus overcometh, ſhould not be hurt of the ſecond death," Rev. ii. 10, 11. and the apoſtle Peter ſays, "If ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, happy are "ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be "troubled," 1 Peter iii. 14. and the apoſtle Paul bids the Philippians "ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one "mind ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel, "and in nothing terrified by your adverſaries, which "is to them an evident token of perdition, but to "you of ſalvation, and that of God." And the ſame apoſtle who commended the Hebrews, as having done well in bearing the great fight of afflictions, encouraged them to go on ſtill, and not to be "weary or "faint in their minds, but reſiſt even to blood," eyeing Chriſt, who endured the contradiction of ſinners to the very laſt, Heb. xii. 3, 4. And he practiſed as he taught, for he was not terrified with bonds or afflictions, nor accounted his life dear unto him; but that which was dear unto him was the ſerving of his Lord and Maſter, in preaching and witneſſing to his truths, as his ſpirit led him, Acts xx. 23, 24. truſting in the Lord to uphold him in enduring of them, or to deliver him out of them, as he pleaſed, 2 Tim. iii. 11. but that which he, and the reſt of the apoſtles and ſaints of Chriſt, applied themſelves to in caſe of perſecution, was to ſuffer, 1 Cor. iv. 12. And whoever they are that will be Chriſt's faithful diſciples now, muſt look to meet with the ſame croſs as they did, not only from the profane world, but from the worldly profeſſors alſo: for there were not only zealous worldly profeſſors in that age, but the ſame ſpirit hath remained in every age ſince, which ſtill gets into the beſt form it can (when need requires) to oppoſe the power thereby. And they that are in the ſpirit and in the power, muſt expect to be perſecuted by ſuch; and they are to bear it, and not to fly from it, unleſs by a particular call and diſpenſation from the Lord for a particular ſervice; which is not the

rule

rule (as it is here made) but rather an exception from the rule. So Chriſt ſending his diſciples in haſte to preach the goſpel, bids them not ſalute in the way, Luke x. 4. nor be ſtopped by perſecution, but haſten to publiſh the ſound of Chriſt's coming in the cities of Iſrael, "For the harveſt was great, but the labour-"ers few," Mat. ix. 37. and yet notwithſtanding all the haſte they could make, they ſhould not have "gone over the cities of Iſrael, before the Son of man "come," Mat. x. 23. There is a time to ſuffer perſecution, and a time to flee from perſecution; and both theſe are to be known in the Lord, and to be obeyed in the leadings of his ſpirit: but to lay it down as a general rule for Chriſtians to obſerve, that when they are perſecuted, they ſhould flee; this is expreſly contrary to the ſcriptures afore-mentioned, which ſhew that Chriſtians are not generally to flee, but to ſtand in the ſervice and work to which they are called; bearing witneſs not only by believing and publiſhing, but alſo by ſuffering for the teſtimony of the truth. They are Chriſt's ſoldiers, and their duty is to ſtand in the battle, and bear all the ſhot and perſecutions of the enemy: if God call them off to any other ſervice, that is a ſufficient warrant for them; but flying upon other terms may prove a great diſhonour to their Maſter, and to his cauſe and truth, and may be the occaſion of a great loſs to their ſpirits, who are ſo tempted to flee. Neither is this bearing the brunt of perſecutions, and ſtanding in God's work and ſervice (notwithſtanding them all even unto death) any tempting of God, but an obedient taking up of the croſs according to his will and command. And whereas you plead that reaſon requires it; what kind of reaſon is it which bids avoid the croſs of Chriſt, and flee for ſafety? And what kind of ſpirit is that, which preacheth this doctrine; laying it down as a general rule, for Chriſtians to flee when they are perſecuted? Is it not that ſpirit which would fain be at eaſe in the fleſh, inſomuch as itſelf will rather perſecute, than be diſturbed in its fleſhly liberty, though

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it is very unwilling to bear the reproach of being accounted a perſecutor? Ah! how did the Jews cry out againſt their fathers for killing the prophets, and verily thought if they had lived in their days, they ſhould by no means have done it: and yet the ſame ſpirit was in them, though they ſaw it not, but thought themſelves far from it. That which blinded them was a wrong knowledge of the ſcriptures, and a great zeal and devotion about their temple, worſhip, and ordinances, without a ſenſible feeling of the guidance of God's ſpirit. The ſame ſpirit that deceived them, layeth the ſame ſnare in theſe days, and men ſwallow it as greedily, and with as great confidence as they did; the zealous profeſſors of religion, for the generality, ſtill becoming perſecutors of the preſent appearance of truth, not knowing what they do.

Thus in the fear of the Lord God, and in love to your ſouls with a meek and gentle ſpirit (not being offended at what ye have done, but looking over it to the Lord, who bringeth glory to his name, and advantage to his truth, by the ſufferings and death of his ſaints) have I anſwered your grounds and conſiderations; and in the ſame fear, love, and meekneſs, have I ſome things further to propoſe to your conſiderations, which are of great concernment to you, and deſerve to be weighed by an equal hand in the equal balance, without prejudice or partiality.

1. Conſider meekly and humbly, whether the ſcripture be the rule of the children of the new covenant? For if the ſcripture was not intended by God for the rule, and ye take it to be the rule, then ye may eaſily miſtake the way to eternal life, and alſo err in your underſtanding and uſe of the ſcriptures; making ſuch an uſe of them as they were never intended for, and ſo miſſing of the true uſe and intent of them.

Now that the ſcripture was not intended, nor given forth by God to be the rule of the children of the new covenant; beſides our faithful teſtimony from the ſight of the thing in the true eternal light, weigh our arguments

arguments from the ſcripture; many are mentioned in our writings; conſider at preſent of theſe three.

1. The ſcripture is an outward rule or law; but the ſcripture ſaith, the law of the new covenant ſhall be an inward law. It is written in the prophets, that all the children of the new covenant, or New Jeruſalem, ſhall be taught of the Lord, Iſa. liv. 13. who teacheth them inwardly by his ſpirit, and writeth his law in their hearts, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. and after this manner did the Lord take his people into covenant with himſelf, and teach them in the apoſtles days, 1 John ii. 27. The covenant is inward, the teacher inward, the writing inward, the law inward: and there it is to be read, learned, and known, where the ſpirit teacheth and writeth it.

2. Scripture (or the writings of Moſes and the prophets) was not the law of the children of the new covenant (as ſuch), not in the time of the old covenant. The law of Moſes was the rule of their outward ſtate, it was the rule of the outward Iſrael, but not the rule of the inward Iſrael; no not then in thoſe days.

In Deut. xxix. 1. Moſes makes a covenant with Iſrael by expreſs command from God, beſides the former covenant which he made with them in Horeb. And he ſaith, the commandment of this covenant is not to be looked for where the other was written, but in another place, in a place nearer to them; even in their mouth, and in their heart; there they were to read, hear, and receive the commandment of this covenant. "For this commandment which I com-" mand thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, " neither is it far off," Deut. xxx. 11. "it is not in " heaven," ver. 12. "neither is it beyond the ſea," ver. 13. "but the word is very nigh unto thee, in " thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayſt do " it," ver. 14. "and this was the way of life then," ver. 15. "See (ſaith Moſes) I have ſet before thee " this day life and good, and death and evil." Here thy eternal happineſs depends; obey this word, and live;

live; disobey it and die. And if they had kept to this word, they would also have walked in obedience to the law; but neglecting this, they could never keep the law, but still came under the curse of it, and missed of the blessings. They thought to please God with sacrifices, and oil, and incense, and observing new moons and sabbaths, wherein the Lord still rejected them, for want of their obedience to this word: and the prophets still guide them to this word, bidding them "circumcise their hearts," which alone can be done by this water. Yea, after much contest between the Lord and them, when they seemed very desirous to please the Lord with what he should require, whether "burnt-offerings, calves, rams, or "oil," in great plenty; the prophet lays by all that, and points them to the obedience of this word, as the way to please God, and as the only thing that he required of them: "He hath shewed thee, O man! "what is good; and what doth the Lord require of "thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to "walk humbly with thy God?" Micah vi. 8. All this is written in thy heart, O man; read there, obey that word, that is the thing that God requires. So *David*'s law was the word written in his heart; he saw through sacrifices and burnt-offerings, to the inward writing, and this made him wiser than all his teachers, who were busied about the outward. The outward law was but a shadow of good things to come, it made nothing perfect; but *David* knew a perfect law, "The law of the Lord is perfect, con-"verting the soul," Psal. xix. 7.

3. The scriptures of the New Testament never call themselves the rule, but they call another thing the rule; they call the writings of God's spirit, in the hearts of his people, the laws of the new covenant, Heb. viii. 10. They call Christ "the Way, the "Truth, the Life," John xiv. 6. (The way is the rule, the truth is the rule, the life is the rule) They call the new creature the rule; walking according to which, the peace and mercy is received and enjoyed,

Gal. vi. 16. They refer to the comforter, as the guide into all truth, John xvi. 13. yea, as the compaſs of all truth, wherein the believer is to have his whole life and courſe, Gal. v. 25. Live in the ſpirit, walk in the ſpirit, follow the ſpirit; keep within that compaſs, and ye cannot err. A man may err in underſtanding and interpreting of ſcriptures; but he that hath received the ſpirit, knoweth the ſpirit, followeth the ſpirit, keepeth to the ſpirit; ſo far as he doth ſo, he cannot poſſibly err. So ſaith John, writing concerning ſeducers, warning againſt them, 1 John ii. 26. "Ye have received an anointing, which teach-" eth you of all things." Keep to the teachings of that in every thing, and ye are ſafe. But may we not be deceived? Nay, the anointing keeps from all the deceit in the heart, and from all the deceits of ſeducers? "It is truth, and no lie," ver. 27. and it leads into all truth, and out of every lie; and this will teach you to abide in him. In whom? In the word which was from the beginning, which is ingrafted into the heart of every believer, and into which the heart of every believer is ingrafted; and ſo he truly is in the vine, and the ſap of the vine runs up into him, which makes him fruitful to God; he abiding in the word which he hath heard from the beginning, and the word which was from the beginning abiding in him, ver. 24. And the apoſtle Paul ſaith expreſly, that the righteouſneſs of faith cometh by the hearing of this word, making the ſame word the rule to the children of the new covenant now, as Moſes ſaid was the commandment of God to them, quoting this place of Moſes for it, Rom. x. 6, &c. So that Paul, indeed, taught nothing but *Moſes and the prophets*; pointing to the very ſame word and commandment of eternal life, as Moſes had done. "This is the word of faith which we preach;" that word which Moſes taught, which he ſaid was nigh in the heart and in the mouth (no man need aſcend up to heaven, or go down to the deep, or ſeek any where elſe for it) that is the very thing we point you

to;

to; that is the word of faith, that is the commandment of life. And with what zeal would Paul (were he now alive in the body) declare againſt ſuch, who ſhould overlook or deny this word, and ſet up his writing, with the writings of the reſt of the apoſtles, for a rule inſtead thereof? Yea I could ſhew yet further, how the ſpirit of prophecy, or teſtimony of Jeſus, or living appearance of God in the heart, hath been a rule to the witneſſes againſt antichriſt's deceit, all along the night of apoſtaſy, Rev. xi. 3.—xix. 10. though they themſelves, being in the night, diſtinctly knew not what was their rule; but by a ſecret breath of life were quickened, guided, preſerved, and in it accepted: but theſe things will open of themſelves, as the miſt is expelled, and the veil rent which hath overſpread all nations, and covered profeſſors generally in this night of antichriſtian darkneſs, and univerſal apoſtaſy from the living power.

2. Conſider whether the ſcripture be your rule or no? That is, whether in ſingleneſs of heart ye wait on the Lord, to open the ſcriptures by his ſpirit, and to keep out your carnal reaſon from thence (which cannot underſtand them, but will be wreſting them, and making them ſpeak as it would have them); or whether ye take ſcope to ſearch into them with that part, which ever was ſhut out from the right knowledge of them. "The natural man underſtandeth "not the things of the ſpirit of God." The ſpirit of the Lord alone underſtandeth the meaning of his own words, and he alone gives the underſtanding of them, which he gives not to the wiſe ſearcher and diſputer (nor to the prudent profeſſor, Mat. xi. 25.) but to the babe which he begets, to which he gives the kingdom, and opens the words which the ſcripture ſpeaks concerning the kingdom. "The wiſdom of "the fleſh is enmity againſt God;" and if that ſearch into the ſcriptures, it will gather only a knowledge ſuitable to its enmity. Thus the Jews were great enemies, and ſtrong enemies, by the knowledge which they had gathered out of the ſcriptures written to

them; and the ſame ſpirit hath alſo wound itſelf into the ſcriptures written ſince: and as then that ſpirit fought againſt Chriſt and his apoſtles, with thoſe very ſcriptures which the ſpirit of Chriſt had formerly written; ſo the ſame ſpirit fights now againſt the lambs of Chriſt, with the ſcriptures which were written ſince. Yea, the great ſtrong-hold of antichriſt at this day, is ſcripture interpreted by the fleſhly wiſdom: for antichriſt comes not in a direct denial of Chriſt or ſcriptures (he is too cunning to be found there), but bends them aſide by the fleſhly wiſdom to ſerve the fleſhly will, and thus undermines the ſpirit, and exalts the fleſh, by a fleſhly underſtanding and interpretation of thoſe very ſcriptures which were written by the ſpirit againſt the fleſh. And through this miſtake it is that ſome innocently cry up things practiſed at the firſt ſpringing up of truth, not ſeeing of what nature they were, and upon what account they were done, and what of them were caſt off by the ſame ſpirit, which before had led to the uſe of them, though ſcripture expreſly teſtifieth thereof. For, Rev. xi. 1, 2. there was the meaſuring of the building which God's own ſpirit had built, part whereof was reſerved for God, part given to the Gentiles, or uncircumciſed in heart, who are now the Gentiles, ſince the breaking down of the former diſtinction betwixt Jew and Gentile. That which God reſerved for himſelf was, "*the altar, the temple, the worſhippers* "*therein*;" all theſe are inward. *The outward court was given to the Gentiles*, to thoſe who would be worſhippers under the goſpel, and yet had not the circumciſion of the goſpel; to them the court which is without the temple is given; and this they get and cry up, and tread under foot the holy city, trampling upon the inward, and undervaluing it. Chriſt within, the ſpirit within, the law within, the power within, becomes a reproach; and this they have power to do, even to keep down the inward, and cry up the outward, all the time of the forty-two months; and to perſecute and ſlay the witneſſes whom God raiſed

raiſed up to teſtify for the inward, and againſt the outward (as it is now in the Gentiles hands, and made uſe of by them to keep down the inward); and ſo the building being thus taken down, the church flies out of it into the wilderneſs, where ſhe had a place prepared of God for her, Rev. xii. 6. Mark: ſhe is not where ſhe was before; that building was meaſured, taken down, and diſpoſed of by God: but ſhe hath been, and is all the time of the forty-two months, or twelve hundred and ſixty days, in another place, prepared by the ſpirit of God for her, whither ſhe fled, and where ſhe was nouriſhed from the face of the ſerpent, who was ſeeking after her, and making war with the remnant of her ſeed, ver. 14, &c. And they that ſeek for her now in her former building, will miſs of her, and may meet with another woman, which (in ſeveral appearances and diſguiſes, and practiſing of ordinances appertaining to the outward court), blaſphemes the holy city, the true temple, altar, and worſhippers. Happy is he that can read this; for it is the myſtery of this book, ſealed from all the Gentiles and worſhippers in the outward court.

Many ſorts cry up the ſcriptures for their rule; but which of them is taught by the ſpirit to keep the carnal part out of the ſcriptures? Which of them keeps out their own will and underſtanding, receiving their knowledge of ſcriptures from that ſpirit which wrote them? Do not men rather gather a knowledge in the fleſh, and then grow ſtrong, and wiſe, and able to diſpute, and confident in their own way, and become fierce deſpiſers of thoſe who cannot own their interpretation of theſe ſcriptures? And thus the mind of God, the true meaning of the ſcriptures, is not their rule; but an image which they have formed out of it; a meaning which their wit hath ſtrongly imagined and fenced with arguments, and the real mind and intent of the ſpirit is hid from them. So by this means many both deceive their own ſouls, and help to deceive the ſouls of others, miſſing of the plainneſs and ſimplicity of the ſpirit, and gathering ſenſes

in the wit and ſubtilty of the fleſhly part, where the ſerpentine wiſdom lodgeth, and twines about the tree of knowledge. Now what do theſe men do? Whom do they ſerve? And whither do they run themſelves, and lead many other poor ſouls, whom they pretend to be helpful to ſave?

3. Conſider whether ye did not flee from the croſs, in your tranſplanting into New-England, and ſo let up that part in you there, which ſhould have been kept down by the croſs here, and gave advantage to that ſpirit to get ground in you, which you outwardly fled from? The ſafety is in ſtanding in God's counſel, in bearing the croſs, in ſuffering for the teſtimony of his truth; but if at any time there be a fleeing of the croſs (whether the inward or the outward) without God's direction, the evil ſpirit is thereby let in, his part ſtrengthened, and the life weakened. That ſpirit which would ſave itſelf from the croſs, is the ſame with that which would perſecute that which will not ſave itſelf. Mark how ſharply Chriſt ſpeaks to Peter upon this account, when he would have tempted him to avoid the croſs: "Get thee behind me, "Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou ſa-"voureſt not the things of God," &c. Mat. xvi. 23. The ſeed offers up all to God in his ſervice, will ſuffer any thing for his name's ſake, even the loſs of liberty, goods, yea, life itſelf, for the teſtimony to the leaſt truth. Now that which ſays to the ſeed, when ſufferings come for the teſtimony of truth, "avoid it, "ſave thyſelf, let not this be unto thee," or the like, that is Satan: and if Satan be not caſt behind, but that counſel hearkened unto which leadeth from the croſs, Satan is followed. And if ye fled your proper croſs, in your removal from hence unto New-England, though ye meet with many others there, yet hereby ye loſt your proper advantage of ſerving and honouring God in your generation; yea, ye loſt that which would have kept your ſpirits tender, and open to the voice of God's ſpirit; and then no marvel if afterwards ye grew hard, and fit to perſecute, who firſt had ſhewed

ed yourſelves unfit and unworthy to ſuffer. Ye might meet with many croſſes afterwards, which might neither be able to humble you, nor keep you tender, having once loſt that croſs which was appointed of God to do it: for all croſſes do not break, humble, or keep the heart low and meek; but ſuch as are ſent and ſanctified by God thereunto.

4. Conſider, when ye came to New-England, whether tenderneſs grew up in you, and was abundantly exerciſed towards ſuch as might differ from you; or whether ye were as eager for the way that ye thought to be the right, as the Conformiſts you fled from were for the way they thought to be right? When Iſrael came out of Egypt into their own land, they were to be tender even towards an Egyptian, much more toward their own brethren. Now when ye were out of danger of being perſecuted yourſelves, did ye lay a foundation of tender uſage towards all that ſhould differ from you; or did you lay a foundation of perſecuting ſuch as differ, and would ſuffer none differing from you, but perſecute them, juſt as the biſhops perſecuted you? Did ye flee the having of yourſelves perſecuted; or did ye flee the perſecuting ſpirit? For if ye did flee only your own perſecutions, and not the perſecuting ſpirit in yourſelves, no marvel though it fell a perſecuting ſo ſoon as the fear of your own perſecution was over. In this fleſhly part there is a perſecuting ſpirit, which if it be not kept down by the power of God, though it loves not to be perſecuted, yet will ſoon be perſecuting.

5. Did you feel yourſelves grow in the inward life, upon coming into New-England; or did that begin to flag and wither, and your growth chiefly conſiſt in form and outward order, in which ye might eaſily be miſtaken too? For many who have given a true teſtimony, and have been faithful in helping to pull down, yet have erred when they came to build up. That ſpirit which is kept low by perſecution, and gives forth its teſtimony againſt things in fear and trembling, is many times exalted when it is out of perſe-

cution; and can weigh, debate, conſider, and reſolve things in that part which cannot build for God. Ephraim, under the rod, ſpake trembling; but the rod being off, he could exalt his own wiſdom, and offend in Baal. That worſhip and way of government and order which a man takes up in the fleſhly reaſon, and which falls in with the worldly intereſt, he ſerves not the true God in, but Baal. This it is that deſtroys and eats out the life of religion in many; namely, the mixing of it with their worldly intereſt: for then the offence of the croſs ceaſes to them, and they begin to be offended at others on whom the croſs is ſtill laid by God, thinking that they may comply with them in joining their religion and worldly intereſt together, and ſo avoid the croſs as well as they. Nay, he that will follow Chriſt, muſt take up the daily croſs, even that croſs which God daily lays upon him, who will ſtill be requiring ſomewhat which is contrary to his own fleſhly part, and contrary to the fleſhly part of thoſe with whom he converſes. And as this croſs is taken up, the worldly part is offended, and the life grows, cutting down worldly intereſts and ways of religion daily; but as worldly intereſts are followed and kept up, the fleſhly part thrives, and the life decays and ſuffers, even till at length it come under death, and then death hath the dominion.

6. Conſider whether your chief ſtrength of ſetting up your church-government and order at firſt, and of bringing perſons into it, and of preſerving them in it, lie in the ſpirit and ſpiritual weapons, or in the fleſh and carnal weapons. If in the ſpirit and ſpiritual weapons, then ye will be able, in God, to perſuade mens conſciences to it, and to preſerve them by the ſame virtue and ſtrength which perſuaded them; and this ye will ſtill have the main recourſe to: but if in carnal, then ye will have recourſe to the carnal; and there will be your main confidence of keeping up your church. For if it was built by that power, it muſt be upheld by that power; ſo that take that away, it falls. This is antichriſt's ſtrength; he ſets up a form

form in the wiſdom, and maintains it by the outward ſword. Take him off from this, and put him to gaining ground by the demonſtration of the ſpirit to mens conſciences as in the ſight of God, or to preſerving his ground ſo, here he is at a loſs, and his kingdom daily falls, even in the moſt refined parts of it. Let every church and people that nameth the name of Chriſt, depart from the ways of antichriſt, and make the ſpirit of Chriſt their ſtrength: for that is indeed the only ſtrength of the true religion, both of the inward and outward part thereof; in that it begins, by that it is preſerved, and there alſo it grows, and is perfected.

7. Conſider (for it lies upon me to preſs it yet farther, and lay it more home to you for your good) whether the perſecuting ſpirit did not take its advantage of aſſaulting you, upon your getting from under the croſs here, into New-England; and whether it did not ſoon find a place in you there, and grow up in you, and bring you from ſtep to ſtep to that degree of hardneſs, that ye could at length even drink the blood of the ſaints?

That it was then the proper time for the perſecuting ſpirit to ſeek to get an entrance into you, is very manifeſt; but whether it did get entrance or no, that belongs to you narrowly to ſearch and examine. When ye were under the hatches, while ye yourſelves were perſecuted, then there was little room for that ſpirit in you; then was not a proper time for your entertaining of it: but when ye were at liberty to chuſe a way and form of worſhip, then was a proper time for this temptation to prevail with you, of ſetting up your own way, as the chief or only way; and, under a pretence of zeal for God, to perſecute the breakings forth of his light in others. For it could not be expected that that ſpirit ſhould directly tempt you (who had ſuffered ſo much by perſecution) ſuddenly to become perſecutors of others; but to hide its bait under a cover; and, under a pretence of zeal for God, his truths, and way of worſhip, to blind your eyes, and draw

draw you aſide into that which is indeed perſecution of it. Sin is very deceitful, and ſeeks covers; and of all ſins perſecution has the moſt need of covers, it is of ſo contrary a nature to the tender ſpirit of the goſpel. Now when ſin hath got its cover, then by degrees it hardens the heart, both from and againſt the truth. "Take heed," &c. ſaith the apoſtle, "leſt "any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of "ſin," Heb. iii. 12, 13. And perſecution moſt hardens of any ſin. How cruel, how bloody doth it make! it even unmans men. Priſons, whips, cutting off of ears, baniſhment, death, all is little enough, if not too little. And what reviling doth it fill mens pens and tongues with, making them ſo hot and paſſionate, that they cannot equally conſider the cauſe; but miſunderſtand it, miſrepreſent it, and ſtrive to make it appear another thing, both to themſelves and others, than indeed in plain truth it is. Look over your writings, conſider your cauſe again in a more meek and upright ſpirit, and ye yourſelves will eaſily ſee how in your heat ye have miſtaken, and dealt more injuriouſly with others, than ye yourſelves were ever dealt with.

There is a time of righteous judgment, wherein the moſt inward covers ſhall be ripped off, and the ſinner appear what he is; and then the perſecutor ſhall bear that ſhame, that burden, that miſery, which is the portion of that ſpirit. It is but a ſmall advantage to it to cover its iniquity for a little moment. If ye could make all the world believe that ye are not perſecutors, what would this profit you, if in the day of the Lord ye ſhould be found ſuch? But having proceeded thus far, it is hard for you to conſider and retreat. That ſpirit hath too great advantage over you, to make you accept of any cover it can now offer you to hide yourſelves under. Oh! that ye could ſee how ye have wreſted ſcriptures, and what ſtrange kind of arguments ye have formed, to make that which ye have done paſs with your own hearts, and to make it appear ſomewhat plauſible to others. Yet

all

all this will not do; the eye of the Lord ſees through you; and that light which ye reproach, makes you manifeſt to be at preſent in ſubjection under the bloody dark power, who will hold you as long as he can, and furniſh you with ſuch weapons as he has, againſt the Lamb and his followers. But ye come forth to the battle in a bad day, for the light is ariſen to conquer, and is not now to be overcome with the darkneſs. And though ye meet the woman and her ſeed with a flood of reproaches and perſecutions, yet that will not ſtop her from coming forth out of the wilderneſs to ſhew her beauty and innocency again in the earth. Conſider theſe things, and come out of this hard ſpirit into tenderneſs (if it be poſſible), that the ſtill, meek, gentle ſpirit of life may be your leader from under all falſe covers into the truth itſelf; where there is a gentle lying down with all that is of God, and not ſo much as an offence becauſe of any difference (much leſs heart-burnings and perſecutions); but a ſweet waiting on the Lord for every one's growth in their ſeveral ranks and ſtations.

Since my waiting on the LORD for the Preſence and Guidance of his Spirit, in the examining the foregoing Grounds and Conſiderations, there came forth an Appendix to JOHN NORTON's Book, wherein are laid down ſome further Grounds by way of juſtifying of their Proceedings; which, for their Sakes, and likewiſe on the Behalf of the Truth and People of GOD, I may alſo ſay ſomewhat to.

1. THEY inſinuate an argument concerning *the not ſuffering of evil, which* (they ſay) *is common to all that fear God, with themſelves.*

Anſw. Evil is to be reſiſted; but in God's way, according to God's will, and not according to the will of the fleſh. Spiritual evils are to be reſiſted (by and in

in the faith) with ſpiritual weapons, which God hath appointed and ſanctified thereto. Earthly evils, outward evils, tranſgreſſions of the juſt law of the magiſtrate, are to be reſiſted by the ſword of the magiſtrate. Here are the bounds which God hath ſet; which he that tranſgreſſeth, ſinneth againſt the Lord and his own ſoul. But the believer is not to ſtep out of God's way to reſiſt the magiſtrate's evil, nor the magiſtrate to ſtep out of God's way to reſiſt ſpiritual evil; but both are to wait on the Lord for his bleſſing on the means he hath appointed; and it is better for each of them not to reſiſt evil, but let it grow upon them till the Lord pleaſe to appear againſt it, than to overcome it by an unrighteous weapon. "Wo "to them that go down to Egypt for help, and ſtay "on horſes, and truſt in chariots," Iſa. xxxi. 1.

2. A ſecond argument is taken from *the ſole cauſe of their tranſplanting, which they ſay was to enjoy liberty, to walk peaceably in the faith of the goſpel, according to the order of the goſpel.*

Anſw. That there was an honeſt intent in many of them in tranſplanting into New-England, I do not doubt; though whether they had a ſufficient warrant from God to tranſplant, was doubted, and objected againſt them by many of their conſcientious fellow-ſufferers here in Old-England, who teſtified to them that they did believe it to be their duty not to fly, but ſtay and bear their teſtimony for God and his truth by ſuffering: and this had been a better way of reſiſting that which was manifeſtly evil, than of reſiſting by the ſword that for evil, which in due time they themſelves may ſee and acknowledge not to have been ſo. But if they did truly deſire liberty, did not the enemy tempt them to be ſelfiſh, to ſeek it ſo far as might compriſe themſelves, excluding ſuch as might differ from them, upon as juſt grounds as they themſelves differed from others? Did not they ſet bounds to the truth, and bounds to the ſpirit of God, that thus far it ſhould appear, and no farther? Whereas God hath degrees of diſcovering and leading out of the

the antichriſtian darkneſs: and he that oppoſeth the next diſcovery of truth, the next ſtep out of Babylon, is as real an enemy and perſecutor, as he that oppoſed the foregoing. In that they teſtified againſt the biſhops, they did well; but if they will now ſet up a ſtand, either to themſelves or others, and not follow the leadings of the Lamb, their life may be withered, and they may periſh in the wilderneſs, while others are following the guide which they left (when they ſet up their ſtand) towards Canaan.

And as for *walking peaceably*; that they might be free from the fear of outward powers, having liberty to try whatever pretends to be of God; and if it appear error, be out of danger of having their conſciences forced; this is a great mercy. But if they would live ſo peaceably as that no diſcovery of God further ſhould ever ſtart up among them, nor the Lord himſelf be ſuffered to ſend any of his ſervants with any further diſcovery of light unto them, this is not a peace which God allows to any man, nor which his people deſire; but only the carnal part, which loves to be at eaſe, and not to be at the pains of trial in the fear of the Lord, of what comes forth in his name. And who walk thus, walk not in the faith, nor in the order of the goſpel, which doth not ſuddenly reject any thing, but firſt thoroughly tries both doctrines and ſpirits, whether they be of God or no. He that rejects that which is of God, cannot thrive or proſper in his ſpirit; and he that tries in the haſtineſs of the fleſh, and not in the patience or meekneſs of the ſpirit, is in great danger of rejecting whatever of God appears.

But can they not enjoy their own liberty, and walk in the goſpel, and manage the ſword of the ſpirit againſt errors and ſpiritual enemies (according to the order of the goſpel), which is mighty through God to cut down the fleſh, unleſs they get the magiſtrate's ſword to cut down every appearance of truth (and every perſon holding forth any truth) but what they themſelves ſhall own? Cannot the ſpirit of God lead into

into further truth than they were led into when they went into New-England? And may not the Lord take his own time to diſcover it to them, and to lead them into it? So that when firſt it appears, it may be hid from them: and will nothing ſerve them but the magiſtrate's ſword to cut it down ſo ſoon as ever it appears? Did not the biſhops of England think theirs to be the goſpel-order, and cried againſt the Nonconformiſts, that they could not live peaceably for them, but they diſturbed the order of the church, and drew mens minds from matters of faith and edification? Surely the deſire of ſuch a kind of peace (as may ſtop the breaking-forth of light to the people of God for their further leading out of Babylon) is not good. This is rather a fleſhly eaſe, than true peace, which the Lord hath not allotted to his people; but they are to wait for the pouring down of his ſpirit, and the opening of the deep myſteries of his life in the latter days, and to try what comes forth in his name, whether it be of him nor no, that they may not loſe the good as its breaks forth, nor be deceived with the evil, as it gets into and appears in the ſhape and likeneſs of the good.

Now the drift of the argument lies in this, that *this liberty they cannot enjoy without a non-toleration of others*. Toleration of any but themſelves, and their own way, diſturbs their peace, their faith, their order.

Anſw. The true liberty, the true faith, the true order of the goſpel, was enjoyed formerly, without this power of ſuppreſſing others by carnal weapons, and violent laws. Yea, this power of ſuppreſſing others, and of compelling to a way of religion and worſhip, came up with antichriſt; and that power which came up with antichriſt, is not of Chriſt. "The dragon gave his power to the beaſt," Rev. xiii. 4. and another beaſt riſeth up with "horns like "a lamb," ver. 11. and this beaſt compelleth, ver. 12. Mark: the beaſt which appeared with horns like a lamb, as if it had Chriſt's power, and maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the ſight of

of men (and who can deny theſe to be of God, that can do ſuch things!) this very beaſt compelleth, or cauſeth to worſhip, as ver. 12. So this beaſt, which appears like a lamb, joins with the firſt beaſt whom it had ſet up under another appearance, and both compel to the worſhipping of an image of the truth (of ſuch an image of the truth as they think good to advance), and ſeduce from the truth itſelf. And he that will not be deceived with their image, with their likeneſs, with that which they call the truth and way of God, or order of the goſpel, and ſo ſhall refuſe to bow thereto, he ſhall not be permitted either to buy or ſell, ver. 16, 17. There is no living as men within their bounds, unleſs they will bow to their image. But the true Lamb doth not compel, but calls to wait on the Father's drawings, till the Father by his ſpirit make willing. And though by the Lamb "kings "reign, and princes decree juſtice," Prov. viii. 15. yet they never had any commiſſion from him to force men to that way of religion and worſhip, to which the ſpirit of the Lord alone can make them willing, nor to fall upon them becauſe they were unwilling. This is from the dragon, where-ever it is found.

This then is the great matter of controverſy, you account it your liberty not to tolerate; and here ſtands your peace and religion (which was a liberty the true Chriſtians never had), and you cannot with patience bear any to teſtify againſt you: and ſo ye now fall upon any that come to witneſs againſt you, even as ye yourſelves once ſuffered when ye were witneſſes. But how can ye manifeſt that God ſhall reveal no truth, but what he reveals to you? Or if he do, that ye have liberty not to tolerate it, or the perſons that hold it forth? Wherefore conſider ſeriouſly whether this be a right liberty ye have aimed at: for if your aim hath been at a liberty which is not granted of God, at ſuch a liberty as will not ſtand with the liberty of his ſpirit in his people, no marvel though ye have run into indirect means to attain it: and ſo from ſtep to ſtep have been led to the utmoſt degree of violence

violence and perſecution; and being engaged in it, are now forced to ſeek for arguments to maintain it. This argument is further inforced, by propoſing *the inconſiderableneſs of the* QUAKERS *ſuffering of a non-toleration*, compared with *a manifeſt and greateſt hazard of toleration unto the country*; *their abſence from hence is no detriment to them*; *their preſence here threatens no leſs than the ruin of all to us*, &c.

Anſw. As for outward detriment, the QUAKERS do not conſider that, in caſes of this nature; but that in them which is born of God, hearing and receiving his command, preſently obeys, waiting for his preſence and power to carry through, and doth not at all mind the hardſhips to be met with. But the inward detriment, ariſing from diſobedience to God, is very great; even the loſs of his ſweet preſence, life, and power at preſent, beſides the utter hazard of the ſoul: for that which draweth back from obedience to the ſpirit of the Lord, the Lord hath no pleaſure in: and they have known the terrors of the Lord to the diſobedient; therefore they may not pleaſe men in forbearing to go where he ſends them; nor (ſtanding in his counſel and power) do they fear them which can kill the body; but they exceedingly dread the death and loſs of their ſouls, and him who hath the power thereof.

And as for their *preſence threatening the ruin of all to you*, that is but a miſapprehenſion. It may indeed be ruin to that part in you which is wiſe and ſtrong, without the preſence of the life of God; but the elect, which is built upon the rock, cannot be ruined by any appearance of God; nay, nor by any appearance of the powers of darkneſs againſt God; *for the gates of hell cannot prevail againſt the true church.* And there is great advantage of errors and hereſies to the true church; for the life grows and gets ground by a fair trial and overcoming of them, and the approved are thereby made manifeſt, 1 Cor. xi. 19. Now what kind of church is yours, which is in ſuch danger of being ruined by that whereby the true church was

was advantaged? So that to plead that either you must suffer *your religion, your souls, your liberties to be made a prey of,* or take this course to defend them, is very inconsequent; and a strong argument against you that yours is not the truth, which needs such a defence as the truth hath not been used to have; but hath grown up, been preserved, and thriven not only without it, but against the strength and force of it. So likewise those considerations of the *shepherd's defending the flock from the wolves,* and of the *keeper of the vineyards maintaining the hedge against the wild beasts,* &c. are not proper to the thing in hand: for the spiritual sheep, the soul, the liberty of the church, the true religion, the true vineyard, are not outward, nor to be defended after an outward manner; but the defence is according to the nature of the thing which is to be defended. To trust or look after an outward power for defending these, is to betray the faith, which is the shield. Therefore let them consider whether, in looking out too much at these, they have not lost the true weapon, and the sight of the true thing which is to be defended, which the arm of the Lord alone gathers, and the arm of the Lord alone preserves.

This argument is yet farther pressed from the present state of your own people, *too many of them being perilously disposed* (as ye say) *to receive their doctrine, being already too much disaffected, if not enemies to order,* &c.

Answ. Alas! alas! have you had your order, your church-government so long up, and are the multitude among you yet so ready to be shaken? Behold what a weak unstable settlement ye have attained to all this time by your outward force! but search honestly, and see who they are that are so ready to be shaken. Are they the *discontented, and unconscionable multitude* (as ye speak)? or are they the most simple-hearted, most conscientious, and zealous towards God amongst you? (For it is experienced here in Old-England, that the ground they gain is not upon the unconscionable, but

the conſcientious). If it be theſe that are ſomewhat touched with the ſenſe of their doctrine, it may make you fear that there is more of God therein than you are aware of. Therefore do not proceed to argue thus violently againſt a thing, before ye have tried it: but come to a deep, ſerious, inward conſideration of the thing between God and your own ſouls: not in the pride, loftineſs, and ſelf-willedneſs; but in the honeſty, humility, and meekneſs of your ſpirits: and then perhaps ye may ſee beauty, and the life of your ſouls, in that which ye now ſo revile and perſecute. And though ye matter not how ye imagine and ſpeak all manner of evil falſely againſt us; yet do not alſo wrong the beſt among yourſelves, by terming them *diſcontented and unconſcionable*, becauſe their ſpirits are not hardened by your form; but yet retain ſome tenderneſs towards God, his truths, and people.

But why do ye charge following the light within ſo deeply, as to be *a giving up of mens ſelves to their own inclinations*, and that it *immediately canonizeth them for ſaints, diſchargeth them from ſubjection, both civil and ſacred, and from the ſcriptures as the rule of life; and by virtue of this their ſaintſhip, intitles to the eſtates and dignities of all who are not of their minds*, &c.

Anſw. Surely if ye were guided by the light within, ye would be preſerved from ſuch kind of injurioufneſs both to perſons and principles. Are your tongues and pens your own, at liberty to ſpeak and write any thing that will make for your advantage, how manifeſtly falſe ſoever? If it were but a natural light, yet, being of God, it would not deſerve this deep blame. Have ye ever tried it, as we have done? If not, why do ye yet ſpeak ſo againſt it, before ye have tried it? We can upon much experience teſtify, that it is againſt our inclinations; that it diſcovers them, calls from them, and is a daily croſs to them; upon following whereof we feel the bitter dying of the earthly part, and the inclinations thereof pining away. And from true ſubjection to that which truly is of God, it never diſcharges; but leads to obedience to what

what is lawfully commanded by authority, and to patient ſuffering under what is unlawfully inflicted. And as for the ſcriptures, it opens them in the life which gave them forth; it fulfils them in us; it makes them our own; it makes us able to ſet our ſeal to the truth of them in the ſight of God; and to receive that for the rule which the ſcriptures ſay is the rule, "the living word, Chriſt the living way, the word in "the mouth and in the heart, Rom. x. the law in "the mind, the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt "Jeſus," which is *the word ingrafted* into their hearts, who are created a-new in Chriſt. And this is the honour which we give to the ſcriptures, namely, to receive that which they teſtify of; to live and walk in that ſpirit which they call to us to live and walk in: to take heed of painting the old nature, and letting the old ſpirit live upon its imaginations, which it gathers out of the ſcriptures, reading them in the oldneſs of the letter, and not in the newneſs of the ſpirit. And we profeſs nakedly that we believe the truth of God, not merely becauſe the ſcripture hath ſaid it (for that which is out of the truth may thus believe); but alſo becauſe, in coming to the thing, and receiving the truth as it is in Jeſus, we have found it to be juſt as the ſcriptures ſpeak of it. But what do ye ſpeak, as if following the light did intitle men to the eſtates and dignities of all who are not of their mind? Nay, the light teacheth not to covet, not to deſire, earthly dignities or eſtates. Let it be looked at over Old-England: which of us ſo much as mind theſe things? Nay, the Lord knows that the love of theſe things is daily rooted out of our hearts more and more, and we are a people whom the world cannot charge with covetouſneſs, or love of the world, wherewith all ſorts of profeſſors hitherto have been too juſtly chargeable. O rulers of New-England! why do you thus overturn the cauſe of the innocent? If we were a bad people, yet to lay things ſo notoriouſly falſe to our charge, and to charge that principle in us with it, which powerfully leads us from it, this

is not right nor juſtifiable in the ſight of God. Ah! take heed of reviling, perſecuting, and ſpeaking all manner of evil againſt us falſely, for his name's ſake whom we are called to ſerve, and whom we do ſerve in following and obeying the light of his ſpirit in us, which hath led us to the true knowledge of God, and to life and peace with him.

About the cloſe of this argument, for the further ſtrengthening of it, it is ſaid, *duty is not oppoſite to duty: paſſiveneſs for the truth, and activeneſs againſt the enemies of truth, are both duties in their ſeaſon.*

Anſw. Every kind of activeneſs againſt the enemies of the truth is not duty; for ſome kind is ſinful. There is a lawful fighting, and an unlawful fighting. Such a kind of fighting againſt an enemy as may hurt a friend, and cannot hurt the enemy, is unlawful. Now the magiſtrate's ſword may hurt a friend, may affright the tender conſcience from its duty towards Chriſt; but it cannot reach the falſhood which lodgeth in the heart, nor draw the party from that, but rather hardeneth him in it: ſo that it is not a duty to have the magiſtrate's ſword drawn out againſt that for which it is not proper, where it may do hurt, and not good. The houſholder would not permit his own ſervants to gather up the tares, leſt they ſhould root up the wheat with them, Mat. xiii. 29. Did Chriſt deny his diſciples that liberty, and doth he grant it to the magiſtrate? Is the magiſtrate out of danger of hurting the wheat, while he is ſmiting at the tares? Nay, is he not in danger of ſmiting and rooting up the wheat inſtead of the tares? Surely this is the magiſtrate's duty, to keep in his place, and not to extend his ſword beyond his commiſſion, and beyond what it is proper for. And let me put this to all the magiſtrates of the earth, who have been drawing out their ſword againſt tares (as they might think); "are ye ſure "that ye never touched any green thing?" Rev. ix. 4. *Did ye never pluck up any wheat?* Ye muſt give an account of this to Chriſt one day. Here in Old-England, in the biſhops days, they were liable to be excommunicated

communicated and weeded out of the church, and alſo be ſtruck at by the magiſtrate: how it hath been in New-England, I leave it to your conſciences to conſider of. Do not ſlubber it over, but make up a juſt account.

What Moſes did, Levit. xxiv. in caſe of blaſphemy, he did by immediate direction from God, ver. 13. and he was a type of Chriſt, who inwardly and ſpiritually fulfills all his outward ſhadows. And Chriſt doth not ſay that every blaſphemer under the goſpel ſhall be put to death, but all blaſphemy or ſpeaking againſt the Son of man ſhall be forgiven; but there is a kind of blaſphemy which he will not forgive. And the church, by his ſpirit, are to try and deal with blaſphemers, even to the cutting of them off by the ſword of the ſpirit, that they may repent, and "learn "not to blaſpheme," 1 Tim. i. 20. but the magiſtrate is not now appointed to cut them off in their blaſphemy, and ſo to take away that time of repentance from them, which Chriſt hath allowed them. Chriſt's ordinances and inſtitutions do not claſh one with another; he doth not bid the church cut off a perſon from the unity, with the ſword of the ſpirit, that he might feel the loſs of life, and be made ſenſible of what a condition his blaſphemies have brought him to, and ſo come to mourn and repent, I ſay Chriſt doth not do this on the one hand, and on the other hand bid the magiſtrate baniſh him, or cut him off with the ſword, and ſo take away his time of repentance from him. Nay: this device ſprung from the falſe church, to make her excommunication outwardly terrible and dreadful, which hath no inward virtue, or cauſe of terror and dread at all in it.

So as touching Nehemiah, he was both extraordinarily ſtirred up by God, and his time was under the law; ſo that the argument from his example is not valid to them, who have not ſuch a warrant as he had (for he ſaith himſelf, that God had put in his heart what he had to do at Jeruſalem, Nehem. ii. 12). and where the ſtate and miniſtration is changed.

The prieſts did that under the law, which is not now to be done; but typified what Chriſt the unchangeable prieſt was to do; ſo likewiſe the kings, judges, and governors of that people, did that under the law towards them, which is not now to be done outwardly towards any, by any king, ruler, or magiſtrate; but typified what Chriſt was inwardly to do in the ſpirits of his people, and how he would gather, preſerve, and defend his church, and wound and ſubdue his enemies, even by his rod and ſcepter, which is the ſword of his ſpirit, the word of his mouth.

And as for Epheſus and Thyatira's not ſuffering falſe apoſtles and the woman Jezabel; we do not ſay that any errors, or erroneous perſons, are to be ſuffered by the church, but to be dealt with in Chriſt's power and authority. But the delivering up of theſe to the ſecular power, we know to have been an invention of antichriſt's, and a great diſhonour to Chriſt (as if his rod and ſcepter were not ſufficient to defend his ſubjects and kingdom, and to beat down his enemies), and alſo a ground of much affliction, perſecution, and blood-ſhed of the ſaints; yea, and of ſuppreſſing the truth of God for a ſeaſon. For the perſecutor having once gotten his cover, then he can do that openly and boldly, which otherwiſe he would bluſh and be aſhamed of. To perſecute Chriſt, to put his people to death, and that for profeſſing and publiſhing his truths; God forbid, ſaith the antichriſtian ſpirit (in every form and way of religion), that we ſhould do this; but in every age calls the witneſſes to the truth (of that age) blaſphemers, wicked perſons, perſons that by their tenets overthrow the fundamental truths of the goſpel, and their doctrines deſtructive, &c. And now what zealous people or miniſter, or what Chriſtian magiſtrate, can ſuffer ſuch as theſe? By this artifice the ſufferings of the ſaints come to abound in every age, and their blood is made havock of: and what is thus done, eaſily paſſeth as an act of juſtice againſt offenders, and not (as indeed it is) perſecution of the truths and people of God. The after age

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can ſee what it is, and cry out againſt it: but ſtill it is the ſubtilty of the perſecuting ſpirit to hide the perſecutions of the preſent age, under an appearance of zeal for God, and of juſtice againſt offenders.

3. In the next place it is ſaid, on the QUAKERS behalf, that *they are the lambs of Chriſt.*

Indeed this is a conſiderable thing; for if they be Chriſt's lambs, then they are innocent, and cannot be the cauſers of their own ſufferings; but that will reſt upon the perſecutors, though they uſe ever ſo much art to make the lambs appear guilty, and themſelves guiltleſs; their ſpirit, nature, manner of fighting (which is with lamb-like weapons, which hurt not fleſh and blood), their whole courſe and converſation, and manner of ſuffering, &c. manifeſts them to be lambs; this is of much more force than a bare ſaying they are lambs. None of this is mentioned on their behalf, but only that they ſay they are lambs. But let us ſee how fairly that is overthrown.

Againſt this, that place, John v. 31. is alledged; "If I bear witneſs of myſelf, my witneſs is not true:" whereupon it is ſaid thus, *Had not Chriſt been God, the reaſon of the Jews had been good againſt him.*

Anſw. Doth not the ſpirit of God dwell in the ſons of God? And doth not the ſpirit of God bear witneſs in them that they are his children? And is not this witneſs true? John ſaith, "We know that we are "of God," 1 John v. 19. Was not this witneſs true in John, becauſe John was not God? Was not the prophets teſtimony true (that they were his prophets, and that God had ſent them, and that it was his meſſage which they brought), becauſe they were not God? Shall the ſpirit of God work wonders in the heart? and ſhall he not teſtify concerning his own work at his pleaſure? Ah! friends, how do ye underſtand ſcripture, and raiſe inferences from it, thus to condemn the generation of the righteous? Search the ſcriptures; Do not the prophets ſtill teſtify that the Lord ſent them, and that it was his word which they ſpake? though they themſelves were not God, but

perſons moved by the ſpirit of God; who ſtirred in his ſervants under the law, but dwelleth, reſteth, and abideth in his people under the goſpel; and what he teſtifieth is true, though fleſhly-wiſe Iſrael (who ſeem to themſelves very ſkilful in the law and letter of the ſcriptures) could not receive his teſtimony either then or now. Ah! friends! ye had need take heed and conſider, leſt the baſtardly birth in you hath taken up an habitation in the letter, without knowing the mind of the ſpirit, whoſe preſence killeth the carnal part, and ſhutteth out the wiſdom of the fleſh from meddling with the ſcriptures.

And whereas you ſeem to refer *all to the trial of the ſcripture*, both ſtation, doctrine, and practice; ſurely if ye had done ſo in truth, ye would have more patiently heard their teſtimony according to the ſcriptures. Every man pretendeth ſcripture, but none truly honour it, but they who are guided by that ſpirit which it teſtifieth of. And they who are not guided by that ſpirit, walk not according to the ſcriptures, but according to reaſonings of the fleſhly part, which windeth itſelf into the letter of the ſcriptures, that by ſome conformity thereto, it may avoid the dint of the ſpirit. And this is the way of antichriſt's prevailing, by getting the form, crying up that, winding his own fleſhly ſpirit into that, and ſheltering itſelf under that. Thus the Jews cried up the temple of the Lord, the ſabbath, the law of Moſes, and writings of the prophets; and under this cover, with great zeal perſecuted Chriſt; he was looked upon as a blaſphemer, as one againſt God's temple, his ſabbath, his ordinances, &c. And ſince the days of Chriſt, the antichriſtian ſpirit ſpeaks great words of Chriſt; his death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, interceſſion, &c. and of church-order, and diſcipline, that under this cover it may fight againſt the comforter, the ſpirit of truth; who alone can lead into truth, and which is the proper way of God's miniſtration ſince Chriſt's aſcenſion. And this hath been the way of oppoſing truth ever ſince, and ſtill is:

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and here is the antichriſt, he that holds theſe in the wrong part, and by theſe fights againſt the true ſpirit.

But if there be any truth in this, that ye are willing to be tried by the ſcriptures, let it yet come to a fair trial this way, and let them have free liberty to manifeſt among you, what they have to ſay from the ſcriptures; why your church, your miniſtry, your order and government, your whole way of teaching and worſhip is not of God, nor according to the ſcriptures, but an invention and imitation, ſet up in the way of reſemblance of what once was truly ſo. If this cannot be made good againſt you, ye will have much advantage of ſhaming them, and of ſettling your people much firmer than by priſons, whips, cutting off of ears, baniſhment, and death; which no man's heart (ſeriouſly conſidering it in true ſoberneſs) can poſſibly believe to be the proper engines of ſettling or preſerving the goſpel of peace.

But that the ſcripture is the rule of trial under the goſpel, I read not in ſcripture; but that the things of the ſpirit are to be known in and by the ſpirit, 1 Cor. ii. 12. The apoſtle John, ſpeaking of antichriſts, ſeducers, and erring ſpirits, which were to be tried, doth not bid them try them by the words which he wrote, or by the other apoſtles words, or by the prophets words; but by the anointing; which keeping cloſe to, they need fear no ſeducers, 1 John ii. 26, 27. The word which was in the beginning being received, abode in, and kept cloſe to, tries all words and ſpirits. That which begets to God is the ſpirit; the great gift (which is given to him who is begotten) is the ſpirit; and this (being given) is to become the fountain of life to the believer, John vii. 38. And in this ſpring of life he is to live, and receive milk and knowledge; and here he is to walk, and here he is to try all other waters, even by this water. And this is more to a believer, and more enableth him to try, than all the words of truth that ever were written; though he that hath this cannot deſpiſe or undervalue

dervalue any thing that the ſpirit ever wrought; but yet the ſpirit itſelf is more to him, and more certain, than any words concerning the ſpirit. Men may make falſe gloſſes, and mud, and make void the ſcriptures, by their reaſonings, and interpretations, and traditional apprehenſions; but this water ever runs freſh and clear, and no foul ſpirit can defile it. Moſes gave the law, which directed to, and ended in, Chriſt: Chriſt in the fleſh finiſhed the work which the Father gave him to do, and directed to the comforter to be the leader into all truth; yea, the ſpring of life to the believer; and here the believer is ſafe: but the antichriſtian ſpirit ravening from this, cries up the letter in the ſtead of this, and doth not ſee how the letter points to and centers in this. "God "hath made us able miniſters of the New Teſtament" (ſaith the apoſtle); "not of the letter, but "of the ſpirit," 2 Cor. iii. 6. He overlooked the letter: that was not the thing he was chiefly to miniſter, but the ſpirit, the power, to turn men from darkneſs to light, that they might feel him that is true, and have the life eternal abiding in the heart: but now, in the antichriſtian darkneſs, the ſpirit being loſt, which is the goſpel-adminiſtration, they ſeemingly advance and cry up the letter, putting it into the place of the ſpirit. Yet in truth it is not the ſcripture neither, in its naked ſimplicity, which is thus cried up, but man's wiſe reaſonings about it. The fleſhly will, the fleſhly underſtanding, the fleſhly ſtrength getting a ſeat there, having formed a building out of it, and reared ſtrong-holds in that part which can be wiſe, and live without the ſpirit; now its life, its intereſt, lies in the ſcripture thus believed, thus underſtood, thus practiſed: thus therefore it cries it up, not as it came at firſt out of the hands of the ſpirit, nor as the truth of it is now ſeen in the ſimplicity and nakedneſs of the ſpirit, but as the wiſdom from below hath formed meanings and apprehenſions concerning it. And here every ſort of men are wiſe in their own eyes, and ſtrong and prudent

dent in their own conceivings and reaſonings, but know not the bringing to nought of that underſtanding, which precedeth the opening of the eye of the babe, which hath that ſight of the things of God given it, which is out of the reach of all the wiſe and ſtrong ones. It is true, under the law they were to try by the law and teſtimony, Iſa. viii. 10. but yet not in an uncertain way, according to their own gueſſings, imaginations, and reaſonings, but according to a certain interpretation and knowledge thereof; and in caſes of difficulty the judge was to have recourſe to the prieſt, Deut. xvii. 8, &c. And the prieſts, in caſes of doubt, had an ordinary way of enquiring by Urim, Numb. xxvii. beſides the way of enquiring by prophets, which was very common with them alſo, 1 Sam. ix. 9.—xxviii. 6. But now the Jews having forfeited theſe, and filling their minds with a gathered knowledge from the law and prophets, trying Chriſt and his truths by this, judged amiſs both of him and them. Now the law was a ſhadow of good things to come; not a ſhadow of another outward law or rule, but a ſhadow of the inward rule, of the law of the new covenant written in the heart, of the ſpirit put within, Heb. viii. and by this law is the true believer fully as able to try, as they were by the former; but without this, a Chriſtian's trial of things is not ſo certain as theirs was under the law.

4. The force of the fourth argument is to this effect, *That the dictate of the conſcience is not a ſufficient plea in caſe of meer and ſingle ignorance, much leſs in wilful and affected ignorance.*

Anſw. The dictate of conſcience is not made a plea by us; but the anſwering and obeying the light of Chriſt in our conſciences, is that which keepeth them void of offence, both towards God and towards men. Now it is one thing for a man to act evil, and plead it is his conſcience; and it is another thing for a man to be guided by the infallible light of the ſpirit; or if he be not come ſo far, yet to be made tender

der in his heart towards Chriſt concerning his practices in religion. In this laſt caſe we ſay, that in things, whoſe good or evil chiefly depends upon the knowledge and perſuaſion of the mind, which Chriſt alone can do, here Chriſt is the ſole Lord and judge of the conſcience, Rev. xiv. 4. and not either miniſter, church, or magiſtrate. Chriſt giveth knowledge, Chriſt increaſeth knowledge, and Chriſt requireth obedience according to the knowledge given or increaſed. That is many times required to be left, upon a farther degree of knowledge given, which was not required to be left before; and ſo alſo upon the ſame terms may things be required to be performed, which were not required to be done before. And this, indeed, is the very ſum of the true religion (ſince the death of Chriſt, and his finiſhing of his work here), either to worſhip in the ſpirit, or to wait for the ſpirit. He who hath not received the ſpirit, he is to wait for the ſpirit. He who hath received the ſpirit, he is to wait in the ſpirit for the movings and outgoings thereof, and to be obedient thereto. And Chriſtians are to take heed, not only of a wrong ſpirit, but alſo of quenching the movings of the true ſpirit in themſelves or others. If the erring mind hath miſtaken about worſhip, and through its miſtake ſet up a wrong way, the ſpirit in the tender plants will be moving againſt it, which the wiſe reaſoning fleſhly part will be knocking down; and ſo the birth, which is after the fleſh, will be getting advantage of perſecuting and keeping under the immortal ſeed. Now ſuppreſs evil to the utmoſt, but take heed of quenching the good in any; take heed how ye ſtop that in its courſe of diſcovering evil (in your worſhips, or otherwiſe) which eaſily paſſeth for good, until the ſpirit begin to make it manifeſt. Ah! friends! if the carnal wiſdom had been crucified in you, and the ſpirit of God had had more ſcope in manifeſting evil among you, what might ye have grown to ere this day! But if the magiſtrate upon every doubt, or difference, or ſtartling of the tender conſcience, ſtep in with

with his ſword, how is the way of the breaking forth of truth ſtopped up! And that which is truly of God, and moſt tender towards him, is moſt liable to ſuffer this way. And this is that which makes the QUAKERS ſuch a ſuffering people, becauſe they have found the benefit of keeping the conſcience tender towards God, and ſo prize it above all things; and this mercy have they received from the Lord, ſenſibly to diſtinguiſh (in this tenderneſs towards God, and in the fear of his name) between the dictates of conſcience, and the voice of his ſpirit there. Now it is not at all pleaded by us, that under a pretence of conſcience, ye ſhould ſuffer all manner or any manner of evil: but firſt, *Puniſh not good for evil:* do not puniſh the good in others, to defend the evil in yourſelves. Secondly, *That which is manifeſtly evil, puniſh it by ſuch hands and means as God hath appointed*; the ſpiritual by ſpiritual, the temporal by temporal; and do not make puniſhing of evil a pretence of perſecuting good in others, and of upholding the evil in yourſelves.

But as touching your diſtinction of meer and ſingle ignorance, or wilful and affected, we can bleſs the Lord who hath delivered us from them both, by the day-ſpring which he hath cauſed to ariſe in our hearts; and we can with a farther meaſure of the ſame ſpirit bear this from you, with a meaſure whereof ſome of the Non-conformiſts bore this from the Conformiſts, who would caſt this upon them, that their ignorance was affected, they were refractory, but might have been better informed if they would. And we wiſh with all our hearts, that there were not too juſt cauſe of retorting both parts of this diſtinction back upon you; for if ye had not been very groſly ignorant, ye could never have thus put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs, caſting ſuch odious reproaches upon the truth, to make it appear what it was not. Had ye not been ignorant of the ſcripture, ye would have known the movings of the life and ſpirit of it in others; but through ignorance of the eternal power, and from your dark reaſonings and conceivings about the

the letter, ye are ready to call Chriſt Beelzebub; not knowing the anointing in the members, no more than the Scribes and Phariſees did in the head. And had not your ignorance alſo been too much affected, ye would have taken more pains about the trial, and not have run into ſuch miſtakes all along, both about them and their doctrines, as ye have done.

That Chriſt referred himſelf either to Pilate's or the Jews trial of him by ſcriptures, is a groſs miſtake at beſt. The Jews did try him by ſcriptures; and according to their underſtanding thereof, found him a ſabbath-breaker, againſt Moſes's law, and that he could not be the Meſſiah, John vii. 27.—52. and xii. 34. but by their law ought to die, John xix. 7. There is no trying of the things of God, by conſidering of ſcriptures in the carnal mind, in the wiſe reaſoning part; but in the ſpirit which wrote the ſcriptures, in the underſtanding which God gives, 1 John v. 20. in the wiſdom which is beſtowed on the babe (who lives in the ſimplicity and pure innocency that is in Chriſt) there the truth itſelf, and alſo the ſcriptures which teſtify of it, are clear. Now Chriſt did not refer himſelf to them to be tried by the ſcriptures (for he knew what was in man, and he knew after what manner they would try him thereby); but he bid them "Search the ſcriptures," which teſtified of him, that ſo they might come to know and receive him, John v. 39, 40. and none knew him, but thoſe to whom the Father revealed him.

So the caſe of Paul's appealing to Cæſar doth not prove that Cæſar was a proper judge in caſes of conſcience; but he was at that time a proper defence againſt the malice of the Jews, who moſt unconſcionably perſecuted Paul, under a pretence of zeal for God, and defence of their church and ordinances. And were ye not in power, but an equal heathen magiſtrate over us both, the QUAKERS durſt refer their cauſe to trial, that they have done you no more injury, than Paul did the Jews. Indeed Paul preached that which was the end of the law, and the overturning of the Jewiſh ſtate: and if their prieſts and rulers had had

him

him to judge, they would have made him as great an offender as ye now make the QUAKERS. Now if your religion ſtand upon ſuch a bottom as theirs did, and not upon the rock, in the faith, and by the Spirit, ye may well fear us; it is not without a cauſe: for this we certainly know, that all profeſſions of God and of Chriſt, imitations and practices from the letter, which ſtand in man's will and wiſdom, will not be able to abide the breath of this ſuffering ſeed, who love the teſtimony of Jeſus, and ſervice to his name, above their lives.

And as for an *erring conſcience*, there lies the diſpute, whoſe conſcience errs, yours or theirs? Ye ſay they have erred from the letter, the order, and ordinances of the goſpel: they ſay ye have erred from the Spirit, and therefore muſt needs have erred from the letter alſo (and this they are ready to prove according to the ſcriptures, if ye dare ſtand to a fair trial.) And alſo, that ye are in a knowledge, faith, worſhip, wiſdom, &c. which ſtands in the will and carnal part, and keeps the carnal part alive. This deſerves a meek and ſerious conſideration in the fear of him who can deſtroy the ſoul; and not ſuch a bloody and fiery trial, as your proceedings and writings too much ſavour of.

5. *That a regular defence of the truth by the godly orthodox magiſtrate, and others reſpectively, is not perſecution.*

Anſw. To bring the ſword of the magiſtrate into the work of Chriſt's Spirit and power, this is irregular; and it doth execution irregularly, cutting down the perſon, and not the ſin; whereas the ſword of the Spirit cuts down the ſin, that the perſon may be ſaved. Chriſt came not to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave; and if any man receive him not, or ſpeak againſt him, he calls not for fire from heaven, or for a magiſtrate's ſword, but waits to be gracious, and by the power of his Spirit (having once convinced and gathered) doth he defend his truths and people. Let but the magiſtrate ſtand ſtill with his ſword, the Spirit of Chriſt will ſoon get the victory over error; and a ſweeter and a better

better victory than the magiſtrate's ſword can effect. Truth ſprung up without the magiſtrate's ſword; yea, againſt it. So it grew; ſo it conquered. The magiſtrate's ſword here (though ever ſo favourable to truth) doth more hurt than good, putting the true ſword out of his place, and keeping down that tenderneſs of ſpirit, wherein the truth alone can ſpring.

That coercion was inſtituted for reſtraining of evil, we grant, (this is the ſame with the firſt argument:) but he that appointed two kinds of coercion, ſet each their limits, which they are not to tranſgreſs. See the anſwer to the firſt argument.

But whereas ye ſay, that *Tares and ill weeds need no more than being let alone to over-run and ſpoil the corn*; that is directly contrary to Chriſt, who ſaid expreſly, "Let both grow together until the harveſt," Matt. xiii. 30. Surely he would not have his wheat in danger of being deſtroyed all the time till harveſt; but he judged that plucking up the tares would more endanger the wheat, than letting them alone, ver. 29. Man may eaſily miſtake, and pluck up an ear of wheat, inſtead of a tare; and better it were to let many tares alone, than pluck up one ear of wheat. Ye have long been buſied in New-England about plucking up of tares. Are ye ſure ye never plucked up any wheat? Nay, have ye not weeded out the wheat, and left the tares ſtanding? Undertaking a work ſo directly contrary to Chriſt's direction (and ſo without the guidance of his Spirit) ye might eaſily thus err. Now what the tares are, is afterwards expounded; they are ſuch perſons as grow among the wheat, but are not wheat; but are to be gathered from the wheat with Chriſt's ſickle, and bound up in bundles for the burning in the day of his harveſt.

Your compariſons of a gangrene, and the like, I wiſh you knew how to apply. The power of God's truth in the ſpirits of his people is no gangrene; but the form without the power is a gangrene, and, like Pharaoh's lean cattle, ſoon eats up the fat. And he who has loſt his own tenderneſs and freſhneſs, ſoon turns perſecutor of

of ſuch as remain tender, and ſeek to preſerve their freſhneſs.

In the days of the apoſtles there was *a king in Iſrael*; then the church was well governed, in the meekneſs and ſweet authority and power of Chriſt's Spirit, which hurts not creatures, but ſtrikes at Chriſt's enemy in creatures. Since that time, the Papiſts have had a long day of doing what was right in their eyes; the Epiſcopalians, a day after them, of doing what was right in their eyes; and ſo the Preſbyterians and Independents, &c. But it were better for them all to lament after the right king, than to ſet up an uſurped authority in his abſence. Carnal reaſon, the wiſdom of the fleſh, hath got his ſeat, giving forth his meaning of ſcripture, and ſo (under a colour of them) ruling over his flock with force and cruelty, and not with the meek, gentle, righteous ſcepter of his Spirit, which alone is appointed of Chriſt to govern them.

So then the magiſtrate's puniſhing of the QUAKERS is not regular by any inſtitution of Chriſt; but only by a law of their own making, as it is further explained, p. 95. of this Appendix; the grounds whereof have been already examined, and found inſufficient to warrant them therein; which I leave to themſelves, and to every man's conſcience, to conſider of, in the dread of God, the judge of all.

Upon the reſult of all, it may not be amiſs to ſtate the caſe between the governors of New-England and the QUAKERS, which is briefly thus:

If the governors of New-England had juſt cauſe to make ſuch a law againſt the QUAKERS, and had a true rightly-derived power ſo to do from God, who is the ſpring of all juſt power; and if the QUAKERS had liberty from the Lord to chuſe or refuſe obedience to it, then their ſuffering death is juſtly to be imputed to themſelves.

But if the governors of New-England had not a juſt cauſe of making this law, nor authority and power from God ſo to do; and the QUAKERS had not

liberty to chuſe or refuſe coming thither, but had an indiſpenſable command from Chriſt their Lord; then their ſufferings and blood will reſt on the heads of the governors of New-England, and will ſtick cloſer to them than to be wiped off by ſuch kind of arguments and reaſonings.

All depends upon your firſt ſtep of proceeding. If that was without due ground, not in the fear of the Lord, without Chriſt's allowance and direction; without having duly weighed the thing in the true unerring balance, but rather in the haſtineſs and ſtiff reſolvedneſs of the fleſh; then all your proceedings ſince have been but aggravations of your ſin; and God might juſtly let you go on thus far, to ſhame you even in the ſight of the very heathen, among whom the ſenſe and abhorrence of this cruel and bloody ſpirit cannot but make your profeſſion of the goſpel of peace become a reproach.

The QUAKERS came to you in the name of the Lord, to diſcover from him to you the evil of your ways; to convince you by his light of your departing from that which was perſecuted in you in the times of your ſufferings in Old-England: but ye would not meekly hear and conſider of what they had to ſay to you from the Lord; but preſently impriſoned and ſent them away; and ſo proceeded further and further againſt them, till at length ye came to drink their blood. So that in truth their teſtimony is the cauſe of their death; and judge in your own hearts whether this be not a perſecution of a deep dye. It were better for you to charge it upon your own hearts, than to have the Lord charge it upon you, when you come to ſtand before him to be eternally judged.

There

There remains yet another Paper (printed here in England) called, "A True Relation of "the Proceedings againſt certain QUAKERS, "at the General Court of Maſſachuſets, "holden at Boſton in New-England, Oc- "tober 18, 1659."

THE arguments therein, whereupon they would have their proceedings paſs for juſt, and not be accounted perſecution, are theſe: *The authority of this court, the laws of the country, the laws of God, and their gradual proceedings.*

Anſw. Perſecutors are very ſeldom (if at any time) without theſe pleas for themſelves. Had not the biſhops as fair a right to this plea, to cover their perſecutions of the Non-conformiſts with? Could not they, in their day, have alledged the authority of their courts, the laws of their country (perhaps ſome not made directly to intrap neither, as yours were), and had not they as confident a pretence to the law of God as theſe? And did not they alſo proceed gradually? He that doubteth, let him read HOOKER's *Eccleſiaſtical Polity*, and other writings of the Conformiſts, and ſee whether their ſpirit was not more mild and Chriſtian-like, and their arguments more weighty by far, than thoſe which theſe have uſed againſt the QUAKERS. Nay, have the very Papiſts themſelves been without theſe arguments? Did they not proceed gradually in queen Mary's days againſt the martyrs? Yea, what pains did they take to convince them of their hereſies, and to bring them into the unity of the true church, as they accounted it! But theſe arguments did not juſtify the Papiſts or Conformiſts in the ſight of God (though they might juſtify their proceedings in the eyes of their own party); nor will they juſtify them to have gone one ſtep beyond the Conformiſts. But as

the ſpirit of perſecution entering into the biſhops and Conformiſts was the ſame ſpirit, as well when it was in them as in the Papiſts; ſo the ſame ſpirit entering into the Non-conformiſts, is the ſame ſpirit ſtill in them, as it was in the biſhops and Conformiſts. And the plea of the authority of their court, the laws of the country, with ſuch a kind of pretence to the law of God, and their gradual proceedings, is no more in truth and reality a ſhelter for them, than it was for the other; though they, in their day, look upon it as a good and ſufficient cover, even as the biſhops did in their day, and the Papiſts in their day. Had they wanted this cover, the nakedneſs of their zeal and profeſſion would have appeared to every eye: yea, their own conſciences could not but have flown in their faces, had they put them to death ſo ſoon as ever they had come over, without any foregoing proceedings. But this is the nature of the perſecuting ſpirit; firſt it ſeeks a cover to ſtop the mouth of its own conſcience, and to hide its blood-thirſty actions from the eye of the world; and then its feet are ſwift to ſhed the blood of the innocent. But the ſame Lord God of truth and righteouſneſs, who hath unmaſked the Papiſts, and unmaſked the biſhops, will unmaſk theſe alſo, and their nakedneſs ſhall more appear than the others, who would hide themſelves and their own cruelty with that covering, which they themſelves have judged in others. It is not therefore any of theſe, but the grounds of their proceedings muſt manifeſt them to be juſt; or elſe, notwithſtanding the pretence to juſtice, their whole courſe of proceedings will prove in truth (and according to righteous judgment) but perſecution.

Now the Grounds of their Proceedings they mention to be theſe:

1. *Their having received intelligence from good hands from Barbadoes and England, of the pernicious opinions and practices of the* QUAKERS.

2. *Their*

2. *Their profeſſed tenets* (how well you have acquitted yourſelves herein, let all that fear God judge).

3. *Their turbulent and contemptuous behaviour to authority.*

4. *Their deſigns to undermine and ruin the order and peace here eſtabliſhed.*

Anſw. He that is willing to receive ſhall never want intelligence againſt the truths and people of God, even from ſuch hands as he will be ready to call good (It is a remnant only that receive truth; the generality of profeſſors in all ages are ſtill ready both to ſend and receive intelligence againſt all the living appearances of it, and of God's witneſſes to it). Nor can he who hath already entertained prejudices ever want matter againſt their tenets, behaviour, or to charge them with deſigns. Have not theſe reproaches always been caſt upon every appearance of God? Are not the veſſels he chuſes to hold forth his truths by ſtill repreſented as perſons of pernicious opinions and practices, their tenets charged to be wicked, and they looked upon as turbulent and contemptuous, &c.? Were not the Non-conformiſts themſelves looked upon as perſons that would undermine and ruin the order and peace of the church; who for ſuch trivial things would make ſuch great rents and breaches, marring the beauty, and diſturbing the unity, order, and peace of the church of England? Surely they cannot yet forget this, beſides that common charge againſt them of contumacy againſt authority. Theſe are but the old weapons of the old ſerpent (only a little new furbiſhed by you for your own uſe), even the weapons which the biſhops wreſted out of the hands of the Papiſts, and which ye have wreſted out of the hands of the biſhops, and they are no better in your hands than they were in theirs. They were good in their hands, ſo long as they had authority to make them forcible: and they have no more virtue in your hands, than what outward authority and power adds to them. England was once overflown with this flood of reproaches;

but now at length (this afflicted people waiting in patience on the Lord's will) they have much vaniſhed, the earth helping the woman: and perſons generally, who are any whit ſober, and come to conſider things in fear and meekneſs, find no ſuch matter againſt them; no ſuch opinions, or practices, or tenets, but the truths of God received and held forth in his fear; their carriage and behaviour meek and humble, void of turbulency, and contempt towards any, and they freer from deſigns againſt authority and orderly government, than any ſort elſe whatſoever. This is well known in England, and it cannot be denied by the authorities and powers thereof, how we have ſtill been like lambs ſuffering from all, not contriving, or ſo much as deſiring, the hurt of any. The Lord knows the deſire of our ſouls to be after truth and righteouſneſs, and our expectations for the eſtabliſhing thereof to be fixed on him alone, and not on any perſons whatſoever, but as he pleaſeth to appear in them, and work by them; and whatſoever happens in the mean time, is received as from his hand, who ruleth on high over all: ſo that our ſpirits do not ſo much as riſe againſt any authority or inſtruments that perſecute us; but we wait on the Lord our God, to advantage his truth, and bring about good to us thereby; and we pity and pray for all who know not what they do; bleſſing the Lord our God, who accounteth us worthy to ſuffer for his name's ſake, in bearing teſtimony at his command to any, though it ſhould be but the leaſt of his truths. Therefore take heed in going on in the hardneſs of your hearts; but know what a people (in the juſt judgment of God upon you) your lot hath been to perſecute; whoſe blood will ſtick the cloſer to you, and lie ſo much the heavier upon you, by how much the dearer they are to God.

And though ye plead *the ſafety of the people*, as being *the ſovereign law*; yet the Lord God knows whether ye have aimed at the ſafety of the people among you in uprightneſs of heart, or whether ye bring

bring this in alſo as a further cover. There is a double ſafety the people may juſtly challenge from you. Firſt, *The ſafety of their conſciences in a tender ſearching after truth, and further removing out of Babylon.* Secondly, *The ſafety of their eſtates, perſons, and liberties in this ſearch.* They did not fly from England to be perſecuted by the prevailing part among themſelves; but to enjoy freedom of conſcience in inquiring after the Lord, his truth, and way of worſhip; and not to be tied and bound up in a form, exalted and eſtabliſhed according to the opinions and reſult of the reaſonings of the major part. Now whether ye have preſerved theſe liberties for them, and really ſought their ſafety; or whether ye have perſecuted or made a prey of them for their conſcience ſake (beyond whatever was done to you here in England, or beyond whatever they had been like to ſuffer, had they ſtaid here in England), the Lord, in his day, will righteouſly judge. Ye have judged between cattle and cattle; the Lord alſo will judge between cattle and cattle: and in that day ye will ſee, that as his choice have been your out-caſts, ſo your choice is rejected by him; and that as his Spirit is the abomination of your eyes, ſo your formal way of worſhip is the loathing of his ſoul. Oh! that ye had eyes to ſee it! that your hearts might not be utterly hardened againſt the Lord, his truths, and people, even to your utter and eternal deſtruction! Little do ye ſee, poor deceived hearts, what a narrow ſtep there is between you and the pit!

The Authority and Government which CHRIST excluded out of his Church, &c.

MAT. xx. Ver. 25 to 29.

" But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Ye know
" that the princes of the Gentiles exerciſe domi-
" nion over them, and they that are great exer-
" ciſe authority upon them. But it ſhall not be
" ſo among you; but whoſoever will be great
" among you, let him be your miniſter: and
" whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be
" your ſervant. Even as the Son of Man came
" not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter, and
" to give his life a ranſom for many."

HERE Chriſt cuts off that power and authority which grows up in the corrupt nature of man, which was ever and anon ſpringing up even in the diſciples. Here he wholly excludes it out of the church, and ſays expreſly he would have no ſuch thing among them; no ſuch kind of greatneſs, no ſuch kind of authority. Among the Gentiles there are great ones, there are princes; and theſe great ones, theſe princes, they lord it over the inferior ones, exerciſing authority and dominion over them; " but it ſhall not be ſo among " you."

The Gentile ſtate was a ſhadow, even as the Jews ſtate was a ſhadow. The one of death, the other of life; the one of darkneſs, the other of light. The one was the image of Satan, the prince of wickedneſs; the other of Chriſt, the prince of righteouſneſs and peace. They were both veils, under which the two kingdoms were hid.

Now in the Gentile ſtate there were nations, princes, laws, governments, dominions, authorities, &c. but all in the fall, all in darkneſs, all in the tranſgreſſion from the life. The whole ſtate was corrupt, and there muſt

muſt be no imitation from hence, no likeneſs of any ſuch thing in the kingdom of Chriſt, no ſuch kind of law, no ſuch kind of government, no ſuch kind of authority, no ſuch kind of anger with perſons that tranſgreſs, no ſuch kind of dealing with any, no ſuch kind of detriment or hurt to any. *There is nothing to hurt in the mountain of God's holineſs*; but there is a righteous ſcepter, a ſweet ſcepter, a ſpiritual ſcepter, which reacheth the ſpirit in the power of life, but toucheth not the outward man.

Two things are here excluded by Chriſt, from whence all the miſchief ariſeth in the church (all the tyranny and oppreſſion of mens conſciences, and of their perſons, eſtates, and liberties, for conſcience ſake): firſt, *greatneſs*; ſecondly, the *exerciſing dominion and authority* by thoſe that would be great therein.

Such a kind of greatneſs as is in the world, is the deſtruction of the life of Chriſt; and ſuch a kind of dominion and authority as is among the nations, is the direct overturning of the kingdom of Chriſt. It ſets up another power than Chriſt's, another greatneſs than Chriſt's, another kind of authority than Chriſt's; and ſo it eats out the virtue and life of his kingdom, and makes it juſt like one of the kingdoms of this world.

"It ſhall not be ſo among you." This ſpirit muſt be kept out from among you; this aſpiring ſpirit, this lofty ruling ſpirit, which loves to be great, which loves to have dominion, which would exalt itſelf, becauſe of the gift it has received, and would bring others into ſubjection; this ſpirit muſt be ſubdued amongſt Chriſt's diſciples, or it will ruin all. The Lord gives grace and knowledge for another end than for men to take upon them to be great, and rule over others becauſe of it. And he that, becauſe of this, thinks himſelf fit to rule over mens conſciences, and to make them bow to what he knows or takes to be truth, he loſeth his own life hereby; and ſo far as he prevails upon others, he doth but deſtroy their life too. For it is not ſo much ſpeaking true things that doth good,

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as ſpeaking them from the pure, and conveying them to the pure: for the life runs along from the veſſel of life in one, into the veſſel of life in another; and the words (though ever ſo true) cannot convey life to another, but as the living veſſel opens in the one, and is opened in the other.

Queſt. *But how ſhall this ſpirit be kept out, or kept down, that it may not hurt the diſciple in whom it ariſeth; or if it do, that the hurt may remain to himſelf, and may not prejudice the church?*

Anſw. When this ſpirit begins to ariſe up in any, ſo ſoon as ever he perceives it, in that which diſcovers it, he is to fight againſt it; laying himſelf ſo much the lower, by how much he finds this evil ſpirit raiſing him up. He is to hearken to that which preſents the croſs to it, and ſo to come down and ſubject himſelf in ſerving and miniſtering to thoſe who are little in his eyes. Inſtead of reigning over them, let him lie beneath them: let him watch and know the life even in the meaneſt, and ſerve it; for that is his place. That which would rule is to ſerve; that which would be great is to be little; and the little one is to become a nation. That which is low is to riſe; and thou art not fit to riſe with it, further than thou canſt ſerve it, both in thyſelf and others. Therefore if ever thou beeſt aſpiring, if ever thou have a mind to rule, if ever thou think thyſelf fit to teach, becauſe of what thou haſt received, ſink down, lie low, take up the croſs to that proud ſpirit, make it bend and ſerve, let the life in every one riſe over it, and trample upon it; and afterwards that in thee may ariſe which is fit to teach, yea, and to rule in the Lord: and ſo long as that hath the dominion, thou mayſt be ſerviceable to the Lord, and to his truth and people; but if ever the other get up again, thou muſt preſently come down again, or the wrong ſpirit will get dominion over thee, which with force and cruelty will rule over the life both in thyſelf and others. Thus if a man be faithful to Chriſt, this evil aſpiring ſpirit, at its firſt appearance, may be dealt with, and kept down; but if it be cheriſhed,

ed, given way to, and once let up, it will be hard bringing of it down afterwards. Therefore the disciples, or the church of Christ, are to watch over every such spirit, to beat it down, to testify against it, to turn from it, to lay it flat, to put it in its proper place; that is beneath all, to minister to all, and so not to suffer it to rise; see ver. 26. "Let him be your "minister." This is his place, this is his work, by the authority of Christ. He that would be great, he that would rule, let him minister. Own him there; if he will lie low there, if he will be faithful there, ye may have unity with him. But in that his aspiring temper, in his ruling, in his teaching by what he hath gained, or what hath been given to him formerly (if out of the present life) he is to be denied and turned from.

If this rule of Christ's had been kept to, antichrist's power could never have got up: nor the poor innocent lambs so often have been worried by the wolves. Ah! poor hearts! how simply do they come thither, where they once tasted refreshment, to find wholesome advice, not suspecting what is got up there since, but give the dominion to a wrong thing, and so take directions from a wrong spirit, and betray their own simplicity.

Christ urgeth this upon his disciples from his own pattern, "even as the Son of Man came not to be "ministered unto, but, &c." ver. 28. If any had right to be great, surely Christ; if any had right to exercise authority, surely Christ; if any was to be advanced because of any gift received, or because of any presence of the Spirit with him, surely Christ: yet Christ took not upon him this kind of greatness, nor did exercise this kind of authority; but he was a servant; he made use of the gift of the Spirit, of the power of life wherewith the Father filled him, to minister and serve with. He did never lord it over the consciences of any of his disciples; but did bear with them, and pity them in their infirmities. ("What! "can ye not watch with me one hour? The Spirit" (said

(ſaid he) " is willing, but the fleſh is weak.") He did not hold forth to them whatever he knew to be truth, requiring them to believe it; but was content with them in their ſtate, and waited till their capacities were enlarged, being ſtill ſatisfied with the honeſty and integrity of their hearts in their preſent ſtate of weakneſs. Nor did he ſtrive to reign over the world, or call for fire from heaven, when they could not receive him, or expreſs indignation when they deſired him to depart out of their coaſts, or pray for twelve legions of angels when they came to betray him, and moſt unrighteouſly ſought his life: but the life he had received of his Father he gave up as a ranſom for his diſciples, yea, and for his enemies. Mark: he did not make uſe of what was given to him, to raiſe himſelf up above others, to make his word to ſtand for a law, and be received; but he waited till that was opened in his diſciples, and in the people, which was able to receive his teſtimony; and he made uſe of his power of life, and the fulneſs of the Spirit, to enable him the more abundantly to ſerve, and to wait in patience for the fulfilling of the will of the Father. And though Iſrael was not gathered by him, yet was he meek, and patient, and at reſt in the will of him that ſent him; and inſtead of reigning over all, could ſerve all, and give that life (whoſe due it was to reign) " a ranſom for many," ver. 28.

" His kingdom was not of this world," nor did he ſeek any greatneſs or authority according to this world, neither over the Jews, nor over the Gentiles, nor over his own diſciples; but he ſerved all, he ſought the good of all: the life in him which was to reign over all, yet here ſerved all, ſuffered for all, and from all, and that was his way to his crown; who having finiſhed his courſe, fulfilled his ſervice, perfected his ſufferings, is ſet down at the right-hand of the majeſty on high, where now he reigns over all, and is made a king by God in righteouſneſs. And this is the pattern which all his diſciples are to walk by. The more life they receive, the more they are to miniſter; the more they

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are to ſerve. They muſt not lift up themſelves by their gifts; they muſt not hereupon lord it over others, or hold forth their knowledge or doctrines, and think to make others bow thereto; but wait in their ſervice, till the Lord make way into mens hearts, and plant his truth there; and upon him alſo muſt they wait for the watering and growth of it.

Queſt. *But is there to be no greatneſs, no authority among the diſciples of Jeſus, or in the church of Chriſt? Is every one to do what he will, to be ſubject to his own fancies and imaginations, to the inventions of his own corrupt heart? What a confuſed building will this be? Surely this will not long remain a Zion; but ſoon become a Babylon, even an heap of diſorder and confuſion.*

Anſw. There is to be no ſuch kind of greatneſs, no ſuch kind of authority; yet there is both a greatneſs and authority ſuitable to the ſtate of diſciples; ſuitable to that kind of kingdom whereof they are. There are laws, there are governments, there are governors, there is ruling, and there is ſubjection: but all in the Spirit; all ſuitable to that which is to be governed; but no government of, or according to, the fleſh. As Chriſt's kingdom is not of this world, ſo the government of his church and people is not according to this world; but as that which gathers in his Spirit, and that which is gathered is ſpiritual; ſo that which is governed is the ſpirits of his people, and they are to be governed by his Spirit, and ſpiritually, and not after a fleſhly manner.

Thus Chriſt himſelf, though he miniſtered to his diſciples, yet he alſo was their Lord and Maſter, and in the Spirit and life of the Father ruled over them. And thus the apoſtles and other miniſters of Chriſt had likewiſe, in the Spirit, the care of the churches, and authority in the Lord, by his Spirit, to govern the ſpirits of his people: not to govern after a fleſhly manner, by their own wills: not to preſcribe to them in a lordly way, either what they ſhould believe or practiſe; but, in the light and in the power of the Spirit, to make their way into every one's conſcience

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in the ſight of God, miniſtering to every one in the Spirit according to their capacity and growth, and waiting patiently for God to convey the food and nouriſhment, and to build their ſpirits up in the faith thereby.

The ſpirit of the prophets is ſubject to the prophets. Here is the government, here is the law of rule and ſubjection in the life. Every one feeling a meaſure of the Spirit in himſelf, is thereby taught to own and be ſubject to greater meaſure of the ſame Spirit in another. He that hath no meaſure of the Spirit of God, he is not of God, he is none of Chriſt's: and he that hath received a meaſure of the Spirit, in the ſame Spirit feeleth another's meaſure, and owneth it in its place and ſervice, and knoweth its moving, and cannot quench it, but giveth way to it with joy and delight. When the Spirit moves in any one to ſpeak, the ſame Spirit moves in the other to be ſubject and give way: and ſo every one keeping to his own meaſure in the Spirit, here can be no diſorder, but true ſubjection of every ſpirit; and where this is wanting, it cannot be ſupplied by any outward rule or order ſet up in the church by common conſent: for that is fleſhly, and lets in the fleſh, and deſtroys the true order, rule, and ſubjection.

The apoſtles and miniſters of Chriſt come from Chriſt with a meſſage of life and ſalvation, with a teſtimony concerning the good-will of God, and his love to mankind; pointing out the way from death to life, from bondage to liberty, from wrath and deſtruction to peace and ſalvation. What they have ſeen, what they have felt, what they have taſted, what they have handled, what they have found redeem and deliver them, that they declare abroad to others, as they are moved, as they are ſent, as they are guided and aſſiſted.

Now that which they preach to is mens conſciences in the ſight of God. They open the truth which they know; they give their teſtimony in the moving, leading, and power of the Spirit, and they leave it to the

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ſame Spirit to demonſtrate it to mens conſciences as it pleaſeth. They are nothing, they can do nothing, they cannot convert any man to God; but the power that ſpeaketh by them, the ſame power worketh in other mens conſciences at its pleaſure. And here is the beginning of the government of Chriſt in the heart; when his truth carries conviction with it to the conſcience, and the conſcience is drawn to yield itſelf up to him, then he lays his yoke upon it, and takes upon him the guiding of it; he cheriſheth it, he cleanſeth it, he comforteth it, he ordereth it at his pleaſure; and he alone preſerveth it pure, chaſte, gentle, meek, and pliable to the impreſſions of his Spirit. And as the conſcience is kept ſingle and tender to Chriſt, ſo his government increaſes therein; but as it becomes hard, or ſubject to mens wills, ſo another ſpirit gets dominion over it.

Therefore the great work of the miniſter of Chriſt is to keep the conſcience open to Chriſt, and to preſerve men from receiving any truths of Chriſt as from them further than the Spirit opens; or to imitate any of their practices further than the Spirit leads, guides, and perſuades them. For perſons are exceeding prone to receive things as truths from thoſe whom they have an high opinion of, and to imitate their practices, and ſo hurt their own growth, and endanger their ſouls. For if I receive a truth before the Lord by his Spirit make it manifeſt to me, I loſe my guide, and follow but the counſel of the fleſh, which is exceeding greedy of receiving truths, and running into religious practices, without the Spirit. Therefore the main thing in religion is to keep the conſcience pure to the Lord, to know the guide, to follow the guide, to receive from him the light whereby I am to walk; and not to take things for truths becauſe others ſee them to be truths; but to wait till the Spirit make them manifeſt to me; nor to run into worſhips, duties, performances, or practices, becauſe others are led thither; but to wait till the Spirit lead me thither. "He that makes haſte "to be rich" (even in religion, running into knowledge,

ledge, and into worſhips and performances, before he feel a true and clear guidance) " ſhall not be innocent:" nor the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs, when he comes to viſit for ſpiritual adultery and idolatry. The apoſtles were exceeding tender in this point: for though they certainly and infallibly knew what was to be believed; yet they were not lords over mens faith, but waited till he who is Lord of the faith, would open the way into mens conſciences. They did not take upon them to be able to turn the key, to let in truth and conviction into mens ſpirits (as men in theſe days have been too apt to undertake); but directed them to him who had the key, there to wait for the conviction and illumination of their minds, and ſo to receive in, as they found him give forth to them.

" Let every man," ſaith the apoſtle, " be fully per-" ſuaded in his own mind;" take heed of receiving things too ſoon, take heed of running into practices too ſoon, take heed of doing what ye ſee others do, but wait for your own particular guidance, and for a full perſuaſion from God, what is his will concerning you. Though I know this to be a truth, yet do not ye receive it, till God make it manifeſt to you; receive truth from his hand, ſtay till he give it you. Indeed the main matter in religion is to keep out the wrong part, the forward part; the baſtardly birth from running into duties, catching of openings, and laying hold of promiſes; and to feel the heir born of the immortal ſeed, to whom all belongs; and that the other birth never afterwards get up above him, but be ſubdued and brought into ſubjection.

Again, ſaith the apoſtle, take heed of doing any thing " doubtingly;" be not forward, be not haſty; wait for the leading, wait for the manifeſtation of the Spirit. Be ſure thou receive what thou receiveſt in faith, and practiſe what thou practiſeſt in faith; for " whatſoever is not of faith is ſin," being an error from the principle of life, which is to guide; and thereby

thereby thou loſeſt ground, and diſhonoureſt Chriſt, and comeſt under condemnation.

And ſo the apoſtle warns believers, to take heed of drawing one another on too faſt, or of judging one another in ſuch things as ſome of them might have light in, others not. He that eateth, not to judge him that did not eat; and he that did not eat, not to judge him that did eat. Yea, in matters of worſhip, he that obſerved a day, and kept a ſabbath, not to judge him that obſerved not a day, or kept not a ſabbath; for the Jews, which were truly converted, were yet hard to be drawn off from the obſervation of their ſabbath, and could hardly bear with the believing Gentiles, who were never taught to keep their ſabbath with them, but were taught to eſteem every day, and ſanctify it to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 5. And thoſe who eſteemed every day, and dedicated it to the Lord (ceaſing from ſin, and reſting to him: for under the goſpel we are not to ſet up a new type, but to enter by faith into the true reſt, which is the ſubſtance of what the other ſignified) could hardly bear with them who obſerved a day. Even in the apoſtles days, Chriſtians were too apt to ſtrive after a wrong unity and uniformity in outward practices and obſervations, and to judge one another unrighteouſly in theſe things. And mark; it is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace and unity, but the judging of one another becauſe of different practices. He that keeps not a day, may unite in the ſame Spirit, in the ſame life, in the ſame love with him that keeps a day; and he who keeps a day, may unite in heart and ſoul with the ſame Spirit and life in him who keeps not a day; but he that judgeth the other becauſe of either of theſe, errs from the Spirit, from the love, from the life, and ſo breaks the bond of unity. And he that draws another to any practice, before the life in his own particular lead him; doth, as much as in him lies, deſtroy the ſoul of that perſon, ver. 15. This was the apoſtle's rule, for every one to perform ſingly to the Lord what he did, and not

for one to meddle with the light or conſcience of another (undervaluing his brother, or judging him becauſe his light and practices differed from his, chap. xiv. 10.) but every one to keep cloſe to their own meaſure of light, even to that proportion of faith and knowledge, which God of his mercy hath beſtowed on them. And here is the true unity in the Spirit, in the inward life, and not in an outward uniformity. That was not neceſſary in the apoſtles days, nor is it neceſſary now; and that eye which ſo dotes upon it, overlooks the one thing which is neceſſary. Men keeping cloſe to God, the Lord will lead them on faſt enough, and give them light faſt enough; for he taketh care of ſuch, and knoweth what light, and what practices are moſt proper for them; but for men to walk on faſter than the Lord holds forth his light to them, this overturns them, raiſing up a wrong thing in them, and the true birth hereby comes to ſuffer, to ſhrink, and be driven back. And oh! how ſweet and pleaſant is it to the truly ſpiritual eye, to ſee ſeveral ſorts of believers, ſeveral forms of Chriſtians in the ſchool of Chriſt, every one learning their own leſſon, performing their own peculiar ſervice, and knowing, owning, and loving one another in their ſeveral places, and different performances to their Maſter, to whom they are to give an account, and not to quarrel with one another about their different practices! Rom. xiv. 4. For this is the true ground of love and unity, not that ſuch a man walks and does juſt as I do, but becauſe I feel the ſame Spirit and life in him, and in that he walks in his rank, in his own order, in his proper way and place of ſubjection to that. And this is far more pleaſing to me, than if he walked juſt in that rank wherein I walk: nay, ſo far as I am ſpiritual I cannot ſo much as deſire that he ſhould do ſo, until he be particularly led thereto, by the ſame Spirit which led me. And he that knows what it is to receive any truths from the Spirit, and to be led into practices by the Spirit, and how prone the fleſhly part is to make haſte,

haſte, and how dangerous that haſte is, will not be forward to preſs his knowledge or practices upon others, but rather wait patiently till the Lord fit them for the receiving thereof, for fear leſt they ſhould receive and practiſe too ſoon, even in that part which cannot ſerve the Lord. And this I can truly ſay concerning myſelf, I never found my ſpirit forward to draw any, either to any thing I believed to be true, or to any practice or way of worſhip I obſerved or walked in; but deſired that the power and leadings of life might go before them, and was afraid leſt men ſhould receive things from my hand, and not from the Lord's. Yea, and this I very well remember, that when I walked in the way of Independency (as it hath been commonly called) I had more unity with, and more love towards, ſuch as were ſingle-hearted in other ways and practices of worſhip (whoſe ſpirits I had ſome feeling of in the true ſimplicity, and in the life) than with divers of ſuch who were very knowing and zealous in that way of Independency, in whom a wrong thing in the mean time had got up, which had cauſed them to ſwerve from the life, and from the ſimplicity.

So that the true church-government being in the Spirit, and over the conſcience as in the ſight of God, the great care muſt be to keep it within its bounds, that nothing elſe govern but the Spirit, and that the government be extended only unto that which is to be governed.

Firſt, Care muſt be had that nothing govern in the church of Chriſt, but the Spirit of Chriſt: that nothing elſe teach; nothing elſe exhort; nothing elſe admoniſh and reprove; nothing elſe cut off and caſt out. Every miniſter in the church is to watch over his own ſpirit, that it intrude not into the work of God, that it take not upon it to be the teacher, the exhorter, the reprover, &c. And every member is to wait in the meaſure of the Spirit which he hath received, to feel the goings forth of the Spirit in him who teacheth and governeth; and ſo to ſubject not

to man, but to the Lord; to receive from the Lord, to obey the Lord. Not to know any miniſter according to the fleſh; but to receive, and ſubmit to what comes from the Spirit, in the Spirit. Not to know Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, but the Spirit miniſtering in them. Paul may err, Apollos may err, Peter may err (and did err, when he compelled the Gentiles to live as the Jews, Gal. ii. 14. for which Paul withſtood him to the face, ver. 11.) and Barnabas alſo did err, ver. 13. But the Spirit cannot err; and he that keeps to the meaſure of the Spirit in himſelf, cannot let in any of their errors, if they ſhould err; but is preſerved. For the leaſt meaſure of the Spirit is true, and gives true judgment; but he that receiveth ever ſo great a meaſure of the Spirit, yet if he keep not low therein, but lifteth up himſelf becauſe thereof above his brethren, may eaſily err himſelf, and draw aſide others into his error.

Secondly, Care muſt be had that the conſcience be kept tender, that nothing be received, but according to the light in the conſcience. The conſcience is the ſeat of faith; and if it be not kept cloſe to the light which God lighteth there, faith is ſoon made ſhipwreck of. Chriſtianity is begun in the Spirit, which keepeth out the fleſhly part, with all its fleſhly wiſdom and reaſonings about ſpiritual things; and as the beginning is in the anointing, ſo muſt the progreſs be. As the Spirit begins in the conſcience, by convincing that, by perſuading that, by ſetting up his light there, and leading the ſoul by that light; ſo that light muſt ſtill be eyed, and according to its growth and manifeſtation in the conſcience, ſo muſt the ſoul ſtand ſtill, or go on.

The great error of the ages of the apoſtaſy hath been, to ſet up an outward order and uniformity, and to make mens conſciences bend thereto, either by arguments of wiſdom, or by force; but the property of the true church-government is, to leave the conſcience to its full liberty in the Lord, to preſerve it ſingle and entire for the Lord to exerciſe and to ſeek unity

unity in the light and in the Spirit, walking ſweetly and harmoniouſly together in the midſt of different practices. Yea, and he that hath faith, and can ſee beyond another, yet can have it to himſelf, and not diſturb his brother with it, but can deſcend and walk with him according to his meaſure; and if his brother have any heavy burthen upon him, he can lend him his ſhoulder, and bear part of his burthen with him. Oh! how ſweet and lovely is it to ſee brethren dwell together in unity, to ſee the true image of God raiſed in perſons, and they knowing and loving one another in that image, and bearing with one another through love, and helping one another under their temptations and diſtreſſes of ſpirit, which every one muſt expect to meet with.

If thou art a Chriſtian indeed and in truth, preſerve thy conſcience pure and tender towards God; do not defile it with ſuch religious practices, duties, ordinances, &c. as thou doſt not feel the Spirit leading thee into; for all ſuch are idols, and exceedingly pollute thee. And be tender alſo of thy brother's conſcience, and be not an inſtrument to draw him into any thing which the Lord leads him not into; but rejoice if thou find him in ſimplicity of heart ſtartling at any thing; for if he abide here faithful, his guide will in due ſeaſon appear to him, and clear up his way before him; but if he be too haſty, he may follow a wrong guide, and that guide will never lead him aright towards the kingdom, but intangle him further and further from it.

Oh! how many have run a whoring from the Lord! How many have firſt loſt the guidance of his Spirit, and then drowned their life in religious performances! How many have drunk of the cup of fornication from the life, at the hands of the fleſhly wiſdom! How many have filled their ſpirit with New-Teſtament idols and images! How many have even hardened their hearts and conſciences, by following the doctrines of men, their imaginary meaning of ſcriptures, and the imaginations and dreams of their own hearts! Is it not

time for men at length to turn back towards the Lord, to wait for the viſitation and light of his Spirit; from whom they have gone a whoring, and whom in all things they have grieved? And if ever any feel and enjoy the guidance of God's Spirit, their conſcience muſt be kept tender to it, and ready to hear and follow his voice, who ſpeaks in Spirit to that which is born of him, which infallibly knows his voice, and (being kept clear) cannot doubt concerning it. "My ſheep hear my voice," ſaith Chriſt: they know it, and the voice of the ſtrange ſpirit they know not ſo as to follow it, but turn from it, both in themſelves and others. But that which is not the ſheep, but hath only got the ſheep's clothing, cries out; how ſhall we know the voice of the Spirit? We may be deceived. Nay; that which is born of God, that which is the elect of God, cannot be deceived. Wait therefore for the birth of the Spirit, to which the Spirit is given for a guide, who infallibly guides it out of deceit. All deceivers are out of this birth, out of this Spirit; perhaps in ſome birth or other framed from the letter, and living in the imitation of ſome practices and ordinances from the letter (under which cover they lie in wait to deceive), but ſtrangers to the life and power, and to that wiſdom which begets and bears to God. Thus the Jews erred, and deceived their proſelytes before the coming of Chriſt: thus the Chriſtians (in name) have generally erred all along the apoſtaſy; and, indeed, for the generality, have not been true Chriſtians, but only a perſecuted remnant amongſt them; whoſe life hath been nouriſhed and preſerved, not by doctrines and obſervations which they have been taught by the precepts of men, nor by the knowlege which they themſelves have gathered, but by a little bread daily handed to them from the Father of mercies out of the wilderneſs; that was the thing which nouriſhed their ſouls up to God, though many of them knew not diſtinctly what it was that nouriſhed them, nor how they came by it.

Object.

Object. *But is not uniformity lovely; and doth not the apoſtle exhort Chriſtians to be of one mind; and were it not a ſweet thing if we were all of one heart and one way?*

Anſ. Yea, uniformity is very lovely; and to be deſired and waited for, as the Spirit of the Lord, which is one, leads and draws into one. But for the fleſhly part (the wiſe reaſoning part in man) by fleſhly ways and means to ſtrive to bring about fleſhly uniformity, which enſnares and overbears the tender conſcience; this is not lovely, nor ſpiritual, nor Chriſtian. And the apoſtle who exhorts Chriſtians to one mind, yet doth not bid them force one another into one mind, but walk together ſweetly ſo far as they had attained; and wherein they were otherwiſe minded, God in his due time would reveal more to them, Philip. iii. 15, 16. He that hath, to him ſhall be given. And the intent and work of the miniſtry (with the ſeveral miniſtrations of it) is to bring into the unity, Epheſ. iv. 13. as perſons are able to follow: and not to force all men into one practice or way; that is the way to deſtroy the faith, and the true unity, and at beſt can introduce but a fleſhly appearance of unity, in ſuch a form of worſhip and godlineſs as eats out the power. And for being of one heart and one way, bleſſed be the Lord, this is in meaſure known and witneſſed. The way is one; Chriſt the truth of God; and he that is in the faith, and in the obedience to that light which ſhines from his Spirit into the heart of every believer, hath a taſte of the one heart, and of the one way; and knoweth that no variety of practices, which is of God, can make a breach of the true unity. This is the one way, for every one to be ſubject to that light of Chriſt's Spirit which he hath received from Chriſt; and every one keeping here, there is alſo one part kept in the midſt of all the variety, and diverſity of practices. And the unity being thus kept, all will come into one outwardly alſo at length, as the light grows in every one, and as every one grows into the light; but this muſt be patiently

waited for from the hand of God (who hath the right way of effecting it, and who alone can do it); and not harſhly and cruelly attempted by the rough hand of man.

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

Concerning the State of Things, relating to what hath been, now is, and ſhortly is to come to paſs; warning all People to look about them, and to wait on the LORD for the unerring Light of his Spirit, that they may know the Times and Seaſons, and the Work which GOD is now about in the World, which is Great and Wonderful; and ſo may not be found Fighters againſt GOD, his Truths, and the Witneſſes of this Age and Generation; more particularly Lamenting over and Exhorting ENGLAND. With a faithful Teſtimony concerning the QUAKERS.

1. THAT the ſpouſe of Chriſt, the true church which God built in the apoſtles days by his Spirit, the church againſt which the gates of hell could not prevail; the church which was the temple of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth; the woman which was clothed with the ſun, who had the moon under her feet, and was crowned with a crown of twelve ſtars, &c. this church, at the cloſe of the fight between Michael with his angels, and the dragon with his angels, fled into the wilderneſs, into the place

place prepared of God for her, Rev. xii. 6. having two wings of a great eagle given her, that she might fly thither to her place; where she was to abide, and be hid from the face of the serpent, and to be fed with the living nourishment from the hand of the Father all the time of antichrist's reign, which is said to be a time, times, and half a time, ver. 14. or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, as ver. 6. or forty-two months, as chap. xi. 2. And she was accordingly gone out of sight, insomuch as the serpent could find her no more, but "went to make war with "the remnant of her seed, which kept the command-"ments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus "Christ," Rev. xi. 17.

2. That the true church cannot come out of the wilderness, till the time of her abode there (the set time appointed by God) be ended, nor then neither, but by the out-stretched arm of the Lord, Psal. cii. 13. She may mourn over her desolate wilderness-state, but she cannot fly out of it, without the help of the wings of the same eagle, which were given her to fly into it. The Lord must pity the dust of Sion, and, by his everlasting strength and compassion, raise up the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, or it can be restored no more, ver. 16. Rev. xxi. 3.

3. That the state of the people of God, all this time of the true church's absence, hath been a state of captivity. The seed hath been in bondage in Egypt the dark land, in Babylon the land of confusion (for such all the church buildings, order, and government have been, in comparison with the true order and government of the church by the Spirit, which was known and enjoyed by the people of God, before this her flight); where they have been mourning under the chains of darkness, and lamenting over their mother; for Sion hath been laid waste, and Jerusalem, the holy city, hath been trodden under foot by the Gentiles; to whom the outward court was given, when God took down his building, and secured his temple, altar, and the worshippers therein, Rev. xi. 2. And

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in this ſtate God finds his people, when he comes to overthrow her (to bring death, and mourning, and famine, and fire upon her, Rev. xviii. 8.) and to redeem them; for then the voice goes forth from the Spirit of the Lord, to the ſpirits of his people, "Come out of her, my people; that ye be not par-"takers of her ſins," &c. ver. 4. Why? were the people of God in her till now? Yea, till the very hour of her judgment, and are many of them in great danger of ſtaying there, even till they feel her plagues? They that ſit down in any church building, taking it for Sion, before God's ſeaſon of building his Sion, ſit down but in Babylon, it is no other; though they who have drunk of the falſe woman's cup (new mixed for them, and ſo are inchanted afreſh into ſome new fine-painted bed of her fornication), cannot believe it to be ſo.

4. That when God redeems his people out of Babylon, he brings them not immediately unto Sion (not immediately into a built city), but into the wilderneſs where the church lies unbuilt, where they are prepared and fitted for the holy land, and circumciſed in ſpirit before their entrance. There is a long travel from Babylon to Sion; wherein the haſty ſpirit, the rough ſpirit, the exalted ſpirit, the murmuring ſpirit; the ſelf-will, ſelf-worſhip, ſelf-wiſdom, knowledge, and righteouſneſs (all which are of great price in Babylon) is cut down; and the ſpirit broken, emptied, made poor, deeply humbled, and ſo prepared for God's holy hill. When a Babyloniſh building or way of worſhip is diſcovered, man would fain have another ready, to put in the place of it ſo ſoon as it is pulled down. Thus man's wiſdom would order it, but the Lord will not have it ſo; but there muſt be a ſeaſon of deſolation, of ſtripping, of nakedneſs, of being unclothed of all the purple and ſcarlet dye of Babylon, Rev. xvii. 4. A pulling off the ornaments of all the knowledge, worſhip, ordinances, duties, experiences, &c. which are held and practiſed out of the pure life. And in this ſtate of miſery and ſore diſtreſs, the Lord lays the foundation

foundation of the new heavens, and of the new earth, in the ſpirits of his people; which, when it is finiſhed, then at length he ſaith to Sion, "Thou art my peo-" ple," Iſa. li. 16.

Obſerve therefore the error of the reformations ſince the apoſtaſy. They have been ſtill building too faſt, and not waiting on God to be hewn and ſquared, and fitted for his building. The reformed churches have ſtill been built of ſtones before they were made ready for the building. They have not waited their time of preparation in the wilderneſs, nor have they waited for God's building them up into a temple, nor for the time and ſeaſon wherein it is God's pleaſure to build. So that though they did well in ſeparating from that which was corrupt and manifeſtly evil; yet they did not well in making haſte into another way of their own forming, but ſhould have waited for God's manifeſtation of the good, and for his leading of them by his Spirit into it. And by this means it has come to paſs, that though there hath been a pure thing often ſtirring towards reformation; yet by an over forward haſtening to build, the good hath been quenched, and the evil hath again (under a new cover or form of worſhip) overgrown it, and then hath been ready to revile and perſecute the good in others: but this the eye which is overtaken with the appearing beauty of its building (having concluded it to be according to the will of God revealed in the ſcriptures) cannot diſcern.

5. That when Sion is rebuilt, when the church its heaven is again ſtretched forth (wherein ſhe was ſeated before ſhe fled into the wilderneſs, Rev. xii. 1.) thoſe that are God's faithful witneſſes (into whom the Spirit of life hath entered, and whom he hath cauſed to ſtand upon their feet) ſhall aſcend up to heaven in a cloud, which their very enemies ſhall behold, Rev. xi. 12. And this was done in the time of a great earthquake, wherein the tenth part of the city fell, ver. 13. The ſhaking at this time is very great in this nation; let them mark what will be the iſſue, and obſerve whether (notwithſtanding all the ſeeming contrarieties) the

the Lord God doth not ſo order it, as to bring a conſiderable part of Babylon down, and of the powers that uphold her.

The people of God, all this time of antichriſt's reign, have been a ſuffering people. The tender-hearted every-where (whoſe ſouls could only bow to the Lord, who could not receive doctrines from men, or fall into worſhips and practices at the will of man) have lain open to church cenſures (as they call them), and to the magiſtrates indignation, under the names of heretics, blaſphemers, ſeducers, and diſturbers of the peace both of church and ſtate: and indeed ſo far as any have taſted of the true light and power of Chriſt, and have been called forth by him to be his witneſſes, they could not but be diſturbers of the carnal peace and ſecurity of the antichriſtian congregations againſt whom they witneſſed. When the true church fled into the wilderneſs, the ſerpent caſt a flood after her: ſhe was reproached and blaſphemed for an harlot, a ſtrumpet, one that was not the Lamb's wife, as ſhe pretended, Rev. xii. 15. For the dragon which perſecuted her (having now gained her ground) had ſet up another woman for the true church, and had decked her richly, Rev. xvii. 4. inſomuch as ſhe was admired for her beauty by all the kings and inhabiters of the earth, ver. 2. but ſhe which was indeed the true woman, was trampled upon and deſpiſed, even by all the outward worſhippers in the outward court all over the world, Rev. xi. 2. And if thoſe of the ſynagogue of Satan could contend to be the true Jews, and the true church, even while the true church was ſtanding, Rev. iii. 9. no marvel though they carry it clear in their ſeveral forms and diſguiſes in the time of her flight and abſence, eſpecially they appearing both in the place where ſhe once was, and in her very dreſs: and here is the eye of God's Spirit, and of the wiſdom he gives to his babes tried, even to diſcern and fly from her there. Let her paint ever ſo often, change her dreſſes in every hour of reformation, come nearer and nearer into the likeneſs of the true church; yet

that

that which is born of the truth eſpieth her; and the young man whoſe ear is kept open to the voice of wiſdom, which uttereth itſelf in the immortal ſeed, eſcapeth her bed, and is not defiled with the great whore, nor with any of her women or daughters, who are born of her after her ſpirit, though they deny her, and ſeem much to differ from her according to the fleſh, Rev. xiv. 4. Enter into the myſtery of life (from out of the reach of the ſpirit of witchcraft) and read me here, that in the true eternal light of all the living, thou mayeſt perceive the myſtery of deceit, and eſcape as a bird from the ſnare, and live. Now the true church being thus fled, what becomes of her ſeed? They muſt needs be ſcattered; they can no more be found in a body as before; there is now but a remnant left which "keep the commandments of God, "and have the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt," and theſe the dragon applies himſelf ſtill to manage the war againſt, Rev. xii. 17. And the beaſt (to whom the dragon gave his power, Rev. xiii. 2. and upon whom the falſe church was found ſitting even to the very laſt, Rev. xvii. 3.) did not only make war with the ſaints, but alſo overcame them: and this power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, ver. 7. of chap. xiii. So that the holy city was to be kept down and trampled under foot by the falſe worſhippers, under one form or appearance of church-worſhip or other, all the time of the beaſt's reign, Rev. xi. 2. And as the beaſt did kill them, ſo the woman that ſat upon the beaſt drank their blood, Rev. xvii. 6. For mark; the dragon, the firſt beaſt, the ſecond beaſt with the falſe church, are all in unity together, and drive on their war and deſign, under diſguiſes and appearances of truths and church-worſhip, and diſcipline, againſt the Lamb and his followers; againſt every appearance of Chriſt in his truth and people. And every where, where he can get into any form without the power, there he manageth his war by the form againſt the power. Thus in popery, by crying up holy church, he knocks down

down all the ſpringings up of truth there; ſo in Epiſcopacy, by crying up that form, how did he knock down the buildings up of the true life and power there alſo! And if he be driven out there, then he ſtands ready to enter into the next form, either of Preſbytery or Independency, that he may not want the advantage of a cover to keep his war on foot ſtill againſt the ſaints and the truths of Chriſt: and here lies his ſtrength; and the liker his form is to that which once was true, the better it ſerves to cover him; and he has better advantage of fighting under it againſt Chriſt, his truths and people, than under another which is not ſo like. But antichriſt's reign (who hath taken the name upon him without the nature, and ſo perſecuted the true nature, being covered with the name) is to have an end; yea (bleſſed be the Lord) it is in part ended, and the Lamb's day is already begun, the outſtretched arm of the Lord's everlaſting power is revealed, and revealing more and more: yea, Babylon is already diſcovered, her waters are dried up, her nakedneſs under all her covering is ſeen, her very life and ſpirit is ſtruck at, her kingdom totters daily; the ſtakes alſo of Sion's tabernacle are ſtrengthening daily, and the Lord is ſtretching out her curtains, and inlarging her territories: and the wrath iſſues out more and more from the throne, and dreadful woes and plagues are prepared for them, who are either upholding any old likeneſſes of what once was true, or ſetting up any new ones in this day of God's power, wherein he is redeeming and bringing forth the life itſelf.

Is it not plain that the beaſt (or antichriſt, who ſat in the temple of God, ruling there as a beaſt by outward force, without the inward life and power, 2 Theſ. ii. 4.) had power given him to continue his war againſt the ſaints, till the very expiration of the forty-two months? Rev. xiii. 5. And was not this power given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations? ver. 7. Did not the falſe church, or falſe woman, till the very end of this time (in one appearance or other, under ſome form of worſhip or other;

other; ſometimes in a groſſer and more loathſome, ſometimes in a finer and more taking dreſs) ſtill go for the true church, being upheld by the kings and inhabitants of the earth, who all drank of her cup of fornication? Rev. xvii. 2. 4. Was not the holy city (or the true church) trod under foot all this while in every kindred, nation, &c. by the heatheniſh ſpirit of the anti-chriſtian Chriſtians therein, who made a great ſhew of zeal and worſhip in the outward court? Rev. xi. 2. For while the holy city is to remain unbuilt, he that will worſhip in it muſt ſink into its ruins, and lie deſolate with it; but he that will be building before God's time, rejects the corner ſtone, which lies hid in the ruins of this city, and ſo builds up a Babylon, to which though he gives the name of Sion, yet it is not ſo in truth; but Sion lies underneath, in the duſt, trampled upon, and ſet at nought by him and his building. Now ſhall the forty-two months never have an end? And ſhall the holy city never riſe again from under the feet of the anti-chriſtian profeſſors and worſhippers of the outward court? Shall the walls of Sion never be built more? Or is it to be expected, when the Lord begins to build her up, and bring her forth, that ever any of the falſe churches ſhould own her? O fear therefore before the Lord! every one entering into that in his own heart, which (being hearkened unto) teacheth the fear, and breaketh the pride, loftineſs, and conceitedneſs of the high-imagining mind, which firſt builds up with apprehenſions about the church, and worſhips without the ſpirit, and then is offended with that which cannot bow to thoſe images. But be it known unto you, O nations and powers of the earth, that the Lord hath raiſed up a people, whoſe knees can alone bow at the name of Jeſus, and whoſe tongues can alone confeſs to him. And if Nebuchadnezzar's ſpirit ſhould heat a furnace of affliction ſeven times hotter than it hath yet been heated all this day of the cruel ſufferings of God's dear people, and threaten all with it that will not bow to the image or form of worſhip which he ſets up;

up; yet this we know assuredly, that the Lord hath begotten a seed which he can deliver, and which we do not doubt but he will deliver, let antichrist's sea and waves roar ever so loud against them. But, however, bow to any image they cannot; for they have tasted of the living truth itself, which hath made them free from such images and idols wherein they were before intangled; and the Spirit of the Lord calleth aloud to them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath set them free, and not receive any more the yoke of bondage upon their necks, but to draw under the sweet gentle yoke of his Spirit.

O England, England! how sad is thy state! how great and mighty things hath the Lord done for thee! but thou still overlookest his hand, and art offended with the work of his Spirit, because it suits not with thy fleshly desires and interests. O England, England! what will become of thee? The Lord hath kindled his fire, and thou addest fuel daily. The Lord is arisen to make inquisition for the sufferings and blood of his people; and thou, instead of repenting of what thou hast done, art greedy of more. Thou hast deeply drunk of the whore's cup of fornication, and that makes thee thus thirsty after the saints blood. Thou criest out against those that put the martyrs to death, as the professing Jews did against those that put the prophets to death; and yet persecutest their Spirit where-ever it appears in further prosecution of the work of reformation at this day, even as the Jews did persecute the Spirit of the prophets in Christ and his apostles. O mourn to the Lord to open thine eyes, that thou mayest not thus stand any longer in his way! Let him bring forth his church, let him set up his truth, let him advance his people, and do not thou go about to limit the Spirit of the Holy One in them. There is none of these will harm thee, but bring blessings upon thee. Let thy governors keep within their bounds, and be a defence upon all people in their just rights and liberties, and see if from that day he do not bless thee. But if there be one thing

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in the Lord's heart concerning his people, and another thing in thine; if he reſolve to bring them forth to his praiſe, and to give them their liberty in their obedience to his Spirit, and thou reſolve they ſhall come under thy yokes and bonds, how can ye agree? Your wrath by this means muſt needs be kindled againſt each other, and he that hath moſt ſtrength will carry it. For as the day of your wrath is come, to ſee the people of God ſo increaſe, grow bold in his truth and power; ſo the day of his wrath is come, to ſee his people ſo reproached, hated, hunted, and perſecuted, for his name's ſake, Rev. xi. 18. And take heed, leſt upon that ſpirit which in this generation ſtill continues perſecuting, the ſufferings, perſecutions, and blood of all the ſaints and martyrs (ſhed all the time of antichriſt's reign) be not required. The blood of all the prophets, from Abel to Zacharias, was required of that great profeſſing generation of the Jews, who ſpake ſuch great words of Moſes and the prophets, but perſecuted Chriſt and his apoſtles, Mat. xxiii. 35. And the blood of all the ſouls that lie under the altar, crying, "How long, O Lord, holy "and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood "on them that dwell upon the earth?" They were bid to reſt a little ſeaſon, and then the blood of all that ever were ſlain ſince the apoſtles days is to be required of that generation of profeſſors, which are found even to the very laſt in the perſecuting ſpirit, Rev. vi. 10, 11.

I do not write this to reproach any ſort of profeſſors; but in true love and bowels of compaſſion, that ſuch among them as ever had any taſte of God, and of his ſweet meek Spirit, but are now grown hard, and found ſmiting their fellow-ſervants, may (if it be poſſible) hear the Lord's voice, which yet tenderly calls after them, that they may not be cut in pieces, and receive their portion of wrath with Babylon, Mat. xxiv. 49, 50, 51. Rev. xviii. 4. As for me, I am poor and weak (a worm, and no man), one who hath been a mourner and wanderer in a ſtrange land all my days;

yea, I have been that fool, who though I have often been very near, yet ſtill knew not the way to the city of my God, Eccleſ. x. 15. And at preſent I am very unworthy and unfit to be the inſtrument in the Lord's hand for the reclaiming of any man from his wanderings. Yet this I can in truth and uprightneſs ſay concerning the Lord's gracious dealings with me, that in the bowels of his mercy he hath viſited me, and turned my face toward his Sion: and his life and Spirit (as he pleaſeth to keep me freſh and open) I know both my way and my leader; and alſo that which is mine enemy, which continually endeavoureth to betray and devour me. And I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, I lie not. I know alſo what I have felt wrath and miſery upon, and what the Lord hath ſo long and ſo ſeverely ſmitten in me, he will not ſpare in others. Oh! that men could hear, and avoid my bed of torment, where I ſuffered a moſt dreadful and terrible hell for many years (bear with me, for I cannot call it leſs), though without either guilt upon my ſpirit, or fear of wrath, being juſtified before God in my own conſcience (till afterwards, under long continuance of miſery and thick darkneſs, ſome guilt was contracted), and having a ſecret root of hope concerning good from God, if once I might appear in his preſence to plead my cauſe there. Who can poſſibly believe the miſery I endured (if it were related)! and yet it had not the leaſt mixture of either of theſe in it for a long time. But after this, through the ignorance and thick darkneſs wherewith I had been long overwhelmed, not knowing what had been, and ſtill was, preſent with me, the tempter by his ſubtilty got in, and led out my mind from what had viſited and ſought after me all my days, to wait and hope for ſome great appearance to ſet me to rights: and here my loſs was very great, my ſoul being hereby removed far away from the preſent feeling of the ſpring of my life, and drawn to neglect the little dawnings of that light which ſhineth more and more to the perfect day;

day; having concluded in myſelf that no leſs would ſuffice to heal me, than its breaking forth in its full ſtrength, even at noon upon me. Thus I deſpiſed the day of ſmall things, and was ſeduced into a gaping after, and waiting for that, which is never ſo to be received: but the little ſeed of light being received, and finding good and honeſt earth, groweth up therein even to perfection, and then knoweth and receiveth the light of the day in its full ſtrength. And although there was ſuch a favour of God left in me, that upon the firſt converſe with this people called QUAKERS, I could own the voice of God in them, and ſet to my ſeal (as in the preſence of God) that it was the true life and power of the Moſt High whereof they were born; yet I could not but deſpiſe it as a weak and low appearance thereof; yea, and ſtarted back from it, as being ſuch a kind of diſpenſation of life and power as was to paſs away; and the paſſing away whereof from me had made me ſo miſerable. And now I am as one born out of due time, and come lagging behind; feeling myſelf altogether unworthy to be numbered amongſt them, or to bear a teſtimony to that truth and power of life wherein they flouriſh, and by which they are redeemed and bought out of the earth with the price of the living immortal blood of Jeſus, by which (together with the word of his teſtimony) they cannot but overcome all the powers of darkneſs (with all the powers of the earth, which ſtand in the darkneſs, and fight under the darkneſs), being taught thereby not to love their lives unto the death. But the ſcoffing conceited profeſſor will be ready to ſay, *What! are thoſe the only people? Others beſides them are as dear to God as they. There are many in forms equal to them, and many out of forms far beyond them.* Whereto I anſwer thus; Yea, there are ſo in the ſcale of man's judgment: but not ſo in the meaſure of the ſanctuary. Theſe are the only redeemed people that my ſoul knows of. There is a ſeed beſides them, not yet gathered, but in Babylon, whom the Lord (in his due ſeaſon) will gather into the ſame light, life, and

power; but there is no other Saviour but that light eternal which hath given them life, and dwells in them; who is riſen in them, come to them, and hath taken them into himſelf; in whom they are, even in him that is true, who is the Son of God, the true God, and the life eternal, 1 John v. 20. who hath poured forth his Spirit upon them, in which they miniſter and gather up to God thoſe who have an ear to hear the voice of his Spirit. Beware, therefore, O ye nations and powers of the earth, what ye do againſt his people! for ye cannot prevail by any inchantment againſt theſe whom the Lord hath bleſſed; but the more ye ſtrive to vilify and ſuppreſs them, the more the Lord will magnify and exalt them. And the life which God hath raiſed up in them muſt reign, do what ye can againſt it. O abaſe yourſelves, and kiſs the Son, O profeſſors and powers of the earth! that ye be not cut off: for the Lord's hand is lifted up, and in his jealouſy he will ſmite home for the ſake of Sion; for his ear hath heard the cry of the poor and needy, whom no man regardeth, Iſa. xxxii. 10, 11.

A WARN-

A

WARNING of LOVE,

FROM THE

BOWELS of LIFE,

TO THE

Several GENERATIONS of PROFESSORS of this AGE;

That they may awaken and turn towards the LIFE, to be truly cleanſed and ſaved by its powerful living Virtue, before the Storm of Wrath break forth, and the overflowing Scourge overtake them, which will ſweep away the ſtrongeſt and moſt well-built Refuge of Lies; and ſink thoſe Souls even into the Pit of Miſery, which are there found when the Storm comes.

Held forth in Four PROPOSITIONS, ASSERTIONS, or CONSIDERATIONS, concerning MAN in his LOST STATE, and his RECOVERY out of it.

PROPOSITION I.

That MAN *is fallen from GOD.*

THERE is an everlaſting, infinite, pure fountain, and well-ſpring of life, from whence all creatures came; from whence their life, being, motion, virtue, and reſt flows; in which they all have a place

and ſtanding according to their nature, eſtate, temperature, and courſe of operation in his eternal counſel, who made all, diſpoſeth of all, ruleth in and over all eternally; whoſe everlaſting kingdom and dominion (which was before all, and will be after all) cannot be excluded by any power or dominion which ariſeth after it; but only ſo far as itſelf hath pleaſed, it hath given way to that power of darkneſs, which is contrary to it; which how it ſprang up, what it hath to do, and how it is to vaniſh, is not for man's comprehenſion to fathom.

In this ſpring of life, man had an eſpecial place and ſtanding. The Lord had created and placed him ſupreme, under himſelf, over the works of his hands; gave him his kingdom here on earth under him, gave him his image to rule in, even a ſufficient meaſure of that eternal wiſdom in which he formed him, to which he was to be ſubject himſelf, and by which he was to reign over and order all with delight, joy, and comfort in himſelf, to the praiſe and glory of him who formed all, and had given him dominion over all. Here was the ſweet eſtate, the ſweet peace, the ſweet liberty, the ſweet uniformity of all; all being kept and preſerved in that life, virtue, wiſdom, goodneſs, power, and love wherein they were made; the creatures naturally becoming ſubject to, ſerving and obeying man (man uſing them and ruling over them not in the tyranny, not in the luſt, not in the vanity, not in the exceſs; but in the righteouſneſs, in the love, in the meekneſs, in the moderation, in the divine wiſdom, in the pure power and virtue of the life); man likewiſe naturally veiling to his Maker, walking in his light, living in his life, ſhining in his beauty, conquering and triumphing over all that might aſſault, in his ſtrength, and continuing perfect and ſtraight before him in purity and cleanneſs of the creature (not degenerated) towards his Creator and Preſerver. Now what could man want, having the ſpring of life ſo near him? What could he deſire, in the purity, in the life, which the Father of life could have

have withheld from him? Had he aſked in the Spirit, could the Father have denied him? And had he ſtood ſtill a while in the life, out of the luſt, could he have forborne aſking in the Spirit? Had he not ſo ſuddenly been tempted to the tree of knowledge, ſurely he had eaten of the tree of life, and had lived for ever.

But man being in honour, lodged not one night (HE FELL THE FIRST NIGHT, read me who can), *but became like the beaſts that periſh.* He loſt the divine image, and then had at beſt but the natural; but that depending upon the divine, the beauty thereof was loſt too. He loſt the eternal wiſdom, he loſt the ſpring, he loſt the godhead, he loſt that which was to reign over the creatures, and then he became but as the creatures; nay, worſe than the creatures. What he henceforth knows of God (as he ſtands in the degeneration) he knows naturally, like brute beaſts (even by the natural exerciſe of his mind, with the faculties thereof, even as the beaſts learn and know by their nature, after their kind); and in what he thus knows, he corrupts himſelf worſe than the beaſts. Let the Lord try him ever ſo much, ever ſo often; drop down of *the dew of heaven* upon him, ſend him *line upon line, precept upon precept, now a little, and then a little,* yet he ſtill remains brutiſh, both in his underſtanding, receiving, and in his making uſe of it all. Still he forgets the truth, and loſes himſelf in the image; gets a notion, an imagination, a comprehenſion of ſomewhat into his natural part (which changes him not inwardly, but ſtill he is the ſame in his root, ground, and nature), but the life, the eternal virtue, he is ſtill eſtranged from, and ſo is brutiſh in all his knowledge and apprehenſions of God and his truths; brutiſh in his worſhipping of him, brutiſh in his belief and hopes, and his immortal ſoul periſhes under all. Outward Iſrael was a true and full reſemblance of him, who had many teachings, a pure law of worſhip and ſacrificing, many prophets to reduce and reſtore them to the right path of holineſs and obedience, but

ſtill they were erring in their hearts from the Lord, and his pure law of life; not knowing their owner, or their maſter's crib, ſo well as the ox or aſs did theirs, Iſa. i. 3.

PROPOSITION II.

That man, by all the imaginations that can enter into his heart, and by all the means he can uſe, or courſes he can run, cannot return back to God again, or ſo much as deſire it.

THE fall of man from God is ſuch, that it hath benumbed all his ſenſes; yea, ſo bereft him of them, that he cannot feel his own eſtate. He is dead, ſpiritually dead; and can no more feel his death, his ſpiritual death, than a man naturally dead can his natural death. He is bewitched into a fool's paradiſe, where he hath a new life, a new virtue, a new wiſdom, a new kingdom, a new dominion (which is indeed but death); with which he is ſo tranſported, that he forgetteth the old; and in this new ſpirit and eſtate cannot ſo much as deſire after it. Men ſpeak of the reliques of the image which the firſt man had: Ah! poor deceived hearts! What reliques of life are there in a dead man? What reliques of purity in a man wholly degenerated and corrupted? Nay, nay; the ſpiritual image, the divine image, the eternal life, the pure power and virtue, is wholly loſt; and there is nothing left, but what is captivated and deſtroyed through the degenerating power. There is nothing at all of the eternal kingdom, of the ſpiritual image, of the divine life, to be found in fallen man, but a little ſeed; and that ſeed not ſo much as ſown in the earth, as he ſtands in the degeneration; for the ſowing of it is the beginning of the work anew. And now, who can read this riddle? *The kingdom is within every man, and yet not ſo much as ſown in any man, till the ſpringing up of the eternal virtue, according to the eternal pleaſure: nay,*

nay, the earth is not ſo much as prepared to receive the ſeed, until the Lord ſend his plough into the heart. So that it is impoſſible for fallen man to attain to ſo much as one true breathing or deſire after God again; this muſt ariſe from the grace, from the mercy, from a new begetting (by the free gift) towards life, towards the divine image again; which was ſlain in man (and the impreſſion of it on him wholly loſt) ever ſince the foundation of the world in his heart, which God hath ſet there, ever ſince he choſe it. And, indeed, fallen man, degenerated man (would the Spirit of the Lord let him alone, and not diſquiet him) likes his own eſtate well enough. The world being written in his heart, his thoughts and deſires are centered there, and of themſelves reach no further. Might he but have the enjoyment of the creatures without, and the enjoyment of ſuch a kind of earthly knowledge and wiſdom within, as he now aſpires after, he would ſit down in Egypt and Babylon, reſting fully ſatisfied with Egyptian knowledge and wiſdom, and with the Babyloniſh treaſures (might he have enough of them); and never think of Sion, and the pure holy land of life any more.

But when the Eternal ſtirs in him, when the pure light opens at any time, then he has ſome little glimmerings of his eſtate, then he has ſome ſenſe of his fallen condition, and ſome deſire to remedy it: What doth he then? Then he beſtirs himſelf to get ſomewhat to cover him, then he gathers ſtones, and makes mortar to build up a wall and raiſe a tower, that he may not lie open to the deluge of wrath; for, by this ſtirring of the life, he hath ſome little taſte and ſight that he is not one with the life, but departed from it. The ſoul, being awakened by the opening of its own ſpring in it, begins to feel the want of its ſpring. It wants the true virtue, the true peace, the true joy, the true comfort and refreſhment, the true reſt, the true liberty, the true life, the true light; and for want of this, its eſtate is miſerable; and in the ſtirring of the ſpring, it feels this miſery; and in this feeling

feeling it groans, it mourns, it pants, it cries out, and the creatural earthly ſpirit can have no reſt becauſe of it. What therefore doth the creature do to ſtill this cry? Why, it joineth, as it were, with the ſoul; it uſeth all the means it can to attain that which the ſoul ſees the want of: it inquireth after God, hearkeneth out after thoſe that know him, ſtudieth the law, obſerveth the ſtatutes and ordinances, performeth the duties, believeth, prayeth, hopeth, waiteth; nay, what is it which the creature will not ſet upon in this diſtreſs (eſpecially if the convictions of the eternal light purſue and follow him cloſe) to ſtill the cry of the ſoul, and to attain the price of the eternal inheritance, which is ſet before the ſoul; which the ſoul can never be at reſt or ſatisfied without ſome aſſurance of, and progreſs towards. But all this will not do. Man in all his own obedience, as well as in his diſobedience, is ſhut out. "There is a flaming ſword which turns every "way, to keep the way of the tree of life;" inſomuch as man can by no means come at the way to the true life, nor enter into the ſtrait and narrow path that leads thereto, but as he is cut to the heart, his life let out, and as he dies, and comes into unity with that which ſlays him, and keeps the way from him. So that man, in his running to God, is thruſt by; as well as in his running from him: in his willing and deſiring after him he is rejected, as well as in his willing againſt him. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him "that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy." Mark; there is a birth of bloods, a birth of the will of the fleſh, a birth of the will of man, John i. 13. all theſe will, all theſe run (ſome of them very hard); but they are all thruſt by, and diſregarded by the Lord, both in their willing and in their running. There are *many* found *running the race, but one obtains the prize*, which one is he that is *born of God*; to whom, when God gives the prize, he will ſay to all the other births (notwithſtanding all their willing and running, their believing, hoping, praying, *&c.*) "De-"part from me, I know you not," ye are the fruit of a ſtrange

a ſtrange womb, not of my ſpouſe, and ſo muſt not inherit my kingdom. And as all theſe will be cut ſhort of the inheritance at laſt; ſo that all that they do at preſent is loathſome to the Lord's ſoul. "The "ſacrifice of the wicked is abomination; how much "more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" Prov. xxi. 27. His ſacrifice, his worſhipping of God, his praying, his reading of ſcriptures, his meditating thereon, and of God and his works; his believing, hoping, waiting, fearing of threatenings, and applying of promiſes, &c. all is abomination. The wicked man, he whoſe heart is not circumciſed by the Lord's eternal Spirit, whatſoever he can, or doth, ſacrifice to God, the Lord loathes, and it cannot profit his ſoul.

Object. *Yea, when he does them in hypocriſy, ſo they are.*

Anſw. Nay, more then ſo. When he doth them with an evil heart, they are much more abominable; *How much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?* But let him bring it with a good mind, with that which he calls the good heart (for the circumciſed heart, the heart of the true new birth, is only the good heart; not that heart which every falſe birth is apt to call good); let him bring it with that heart which he takes to be the upright heart; with an honeſt intention, ſo far as he knows; take his ſacrifices at the very beſt, at the very pureſt he can attain to; yet then they are abomination.

And the reaſon hereof is plain and manifeſt. *The fountain is unclean*, the root in him is corrupt; and *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Make the tree good, and his fruit will be good:* but while the tree is bad, the fruit cannot be good. Now can the holy God be pleaſed with that ſacrifice which comes from the unclean ſpring? Can God own or approve that knowledge of himſelf, that faith, that love, that obedience, that integrity, or uprightneſs, that induſtry or diligence, thoſe prayers or breathings, which man pumps up out of the old ciſtern? Nay, all theſe muſt into

into the pit, with the common filthineſs and pollutions of the earth; and when the Lord takes theſe aſide from the ſeveral ſorts of profeſſors, what will be left in them? Oh! how many have builded up a wall, daubing it with untempered mortar, which will not ſtand in the day of trial, nor ſhelter them from the eternal flames? Oh! what yelling and roaring will there ſhortly be in ſuch as by no means will be warned, but would be juſtifying of themſelves in their falſe knowledge and practices, and reſerving their fabricks of religion to the trial of the day! and the day will try them indeed; even to the bitter perplexity and anguiſh of their hearts, when they come to ſee that there is now no way of eſcape; but they muſt lie down in the bed of eternal ſorrow, miſery, and torment; and in utter ſeparation from that wherein they thought they had a large and unqueſtionable ſhare.

PROPOSITION III.

That all profeſſions of God and of Chriſt upon the earth; all knowledge and beliefs whatſoever, with all practices of duties and ordinances of worſhip, ſave only ſuch as proceed from, and are held in the pure life, are but as ſo many fig-leaves, or deceitful plaſters, which may ſkin over the wound, but cannot truly heal it.

THE wound of man is deep by the fall: he hath really loſt God, he is ſhut out of his commonwealth; yea, in that eſtate, he is altogether without hope (for the hope ſprings from God's viſitation of him with his light, and from the living promiſe).

That which recovers man, is the eternal virtue, the endleſs power, the life immortal, the Chriſt of God.

Now, whatever knowledge man gathers (whether from the book of the creatures, or from the ſcriptures, or any other ways) or whatever man profeſſes, or whatever

whatever man practiſes out of this, it is but a cover of his own, but a formed thing; but his own image of truth, of knowledge, of faith, of love, of obedience, of worſhip; it is not *the living truth, the living knowledge, the living faith, the living love, the living obedience, the living worſhip:* and ſo it is but mortal, but fleſhly; and when it comes before the eternal flames, it will not abide them, but vaniſh. "All fleſh is graſs;" all the knowledge, the faith, the love, the worſhip, the obedience, the righteouſneſs, &c. which man (who is ignorant of the leadings and power of the life) can come at, is but graſs; yea, the flower of it, the ſeeming beauty and goodlineſs of it, the very choiceſt of it in any ſort of profeſſors, is but "as the "flower of the field:" it may make a fair ſhew there, but when the Lord cutteth it down with his ſickle, and when his ſun riſeth upon it with its burning heat, it will ſoon wither, and his fire will ſoon devour it, ſo that its very place ſhall be found no more. What will become of all the fruit that fleſh hath borne, when God maketh bare, and cutteth down the root? What will become of all mortal knowledge of the ſcriptures, mortal worſhip; the faith and obedience which hath its root, growth, and ſpreading in the mortal part, when the Lord heweth at it with his immortal axe? Do not deceive yourſelves; there is nothing will ſtand but what is immortal, and that which is gathered into it, and ſo one with it. No knowledge, no faith, no love, no obedience, no worſhip, no hopes, but what ſpring from the ſeed, are gathered into the ſeed, and live in the ſeed. This will abide, when all that ſprings from man, and hath its place and reſidence in the mortal part (and not in the true treaſury) will come to an end, and diſappoint all who have their hopes of the inheritance there.

PROPO-

PROPOSITION IV.

That the living ſeed of eternal life, which God hath hid in man underneath his earth, hath in it the living virtue, which alone can heal man, and reſtore him to God.

THAT which heals of the death, is the tree of life, whoſe rind or bark, whoſe leaves, whoſe bloſſoms, whoſe fruit, whoſe boughs and branches, whoſe bulk or body, with the whole ſap thereof, is all healing, and there is nothing elſe can heal. Let man catch all the knowledge that ever ſprang from the life; if he could believe (I mean in the man's part) all that ever the life ſpake, if it were ſo that he could perform all that ever the life called for, yet this would not heal him at all: whereas the leaſt virtue from the life, ſpringing up into, and livingly retained in, the life's veſſel, truly refreſhes and heals. The ſeed in all its ſpringings up, and ſhootings forth in the heart, lets out of its healing virtue. Let but in a reproof, a conviction, a judgment, a condemnation, which wounds that part which hath erred from the life, yet even in that there is a ſecret hidden healing of ſomewhat elſe. *The ſmitings of the righteous principle are as balm, and its reproofs an excellent oil. Thy rod and thy ſtaff comfort me. Light is ſown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.* In all the tearings, ſmitings, and rendings of the earthly part (with which the ſeed alſo ſuffers) and the faith in which theſe are received, is the preſent ſubſtance of the healing from the eternal virtue hoped for.

Now, who will be wiſe? Let him become a fool in the fleſh. Who will be ſtrong? Let him become weak in the man's part. Who will be ſaved by the eternal power? Let him ceaſe from the man in himſelf. Whoever would be able, in the life, to do all things, let him ſink into that in himſelf which is not, that it may bring to nought all things in him that are; that

that ſo it alone may be: and he by it being brought to nothing, will eaſily become all in it. This is the true way of reſtoration, of redemption; firſt to be loſt, to be overcome, to be drowned, to be made nothing by that *which is not*; that that may come to BE in him, and he be quickened, raiſed up, and perfected in that, and ſo become poſſeſſor of the fulneſs. "The race is "not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong;" but he that daily loſeth his ſtrength, and his ability to know, or ſo much as to will or deſire (even till at length he become nothing at all) in him is the corrupt at laſt deſtroyed, and the mortal ſwallowed up of the life. He that feels the pure ſeed ſpringing up, and by the growth of that is daily begotten, quickened, raiſed, juſtified, ſanctified, circumciſed, baptized, fed in one part, and ſtarved in another. When the work of begetting, quickening, raiſing, regenerating, juſtifying, ſanctifying, circumciſing, baptizing is finiſhed in him, and he is thoroughly begotten into the life, quickened by the life, raiſed in the life, regenerated, juſtified, ſanctified, circumciſed, and baptized through the life, he ſhall have the kingdom, wear the crown, enter into the joy of his Lord, weilding the ſcepter of righteouſneſs with his Lord in his kingdom for ever. Now this work is to be done in the heart, on this ſide the grave; for after death comes judgment for the things done in the body; and the tree is to be diſpoſed of, according as it is found at its fall, either to the fire, or to grow and flouriſh in the land of life. Therefore be not ſlothful, but watch unto the movings of the living ſeed, that its work may be perfected; that it may arrive at its ſtature, and come to its full growth, and may finiſh its ſervice and teſtimony, that ſo it may enter into its habitation, and receive you with it into its everlaſting manſion, where every ſervant and conſtant ſufferer with the ſeed ſhall be welcomed of its Father, and remain a partaker of their joy and fulneſs for ever.

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

Where

Where is the Wiſe? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Diſputer of this World? Hath not God made fooliſh the Wiſdom of this World? 1 COR. i. 20.

THESE have always been the enemies and oppoſers of truth, and ſetters up of falſe images thereof in all ages; *the wiſe, the learned, the great diſputants.* To theſe truth has ſtill been mean and contemptible, their eye hath ſtill overlooked it, and their imaginations have ſtill out-run it, finding out ſomewhat elſe in the ſtead thereof; for which they have been ſtill able and vigorous to contend, and againſt the truth itſelf. And indeed how can the wiſe eye ſee that, how can the learned eye acknowledge that, which comes quite out of the way of its knowledge and learning, even in a path that it is not at all acquainted with? "Wiſdom is juſtified of her "children." Thoſe that are wiſe to ſalvation, thoſe that are learned in the Spirit, thoſe that can diſpute in the power of the life and demonſtration of the Spirit, theſe know her habitation, and her out-goings, and can own her in every age, and in every diſpenſation and coming forth: but the wiſe and learned of this world are ſhut out of this wiſdom, and in all their ſearches after truth cannot find her; and if at any time they do find and taſte ſomewhat of her, yet they cannot keep her; but the wiſdom, and learning, and ſtrength of the earthly part in them, ſoon betrays and makes a prey of the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt, and of his pure goſpel; which cannot be comprehended, nor will take up a dwelling-place with this wiſdom, but brings it to nothing, tramples upon it, and keeps it down for ever, where it abides.

Three ſorts of enemies, of the wiſe, the learned, the great diſputants, truth hath always had. Firſt, Of ſuch as have denied the true form of knowledge and

and worſhip. Secondly, Of ſuch as have owned the form, but withſtood the power. Thirdly, Of ſuch as have had a taſte of the power, but afterwards erred from it; and ſo held that, which they had once a true taſte of, in the unrighteous part, and likewiſe added to it by their own imaginations.

When Iſrael was in Egypt (that poor illiterate company of brick-makers) in bondage under that wiſe people, the Egyptians, with all their wiſdom, could not own their God, or their worſhip; but their God was an unknown being to all that wiſdom, Exod. v. 2. and his worſhip and ſacrifice the abomination of their eyes, Exod. viii. 26. And Jannes and Jambres, with other wiſe magicians, withſtood the appearance of God; and Pharaoh and his people, with their wiſdom, thought to have kept God's Iſrael from multiplying, Exod. i. 10. and to have held Iſrael ſtill under their ſervitude, after the Lord was riſen to ſtretch out his arm for their deliverance, Exod. v. 8, 9. And how did all the wiſe nations ſtill watch to make a prey of God's Jeruſalem! how did they count the towers! how often did they think to divide the ſpoil! Judg. v. 28. Iſa. xxxiii. 18. how did Senacherib and Rabſheka make her their own! and when the Lord did at any time give Jacob for a ſpoil, and Iſrael to the robbers, how did they think to keep her under for ever! The wiſe Aſſyrian, the Moabite, the Ammonite, the Edomite, the Philiſtine, the Amalekite, the wiſe Babylonian or Chaldean, thought to keep her under, as Pharaoh had done, even till their wiſdom and knowledge perverted them alſo, Iſa. xlvii. 10. and the prince of Tyre, who was wiſer than Daniel, Ezek. xxviii. 3. he alſo could inſult over Jeruſalem, and rejoice at her downfall and captivity, chap. xxvi. 2.

But to come cloſer; come to Iſrael itſelf. That people, by all the wiſdom it could gather from the law, by all the experiences it had had of God's power, by all the faith that was wrought in them upon deliverances, yet had not eyes to ſee, nor ears to hear, nor hearts to perceive; but were a people that did

always err in their hearts, and did not understand the way of truth and peace. The prophets among them were still fools; yea, the spiritual man mad, Hos. ix. 7. The priests were generally ignorant of the Lord (for though they had the ark of his presence, his tabernacle, his temple, altar, sacrifices, worship, &c. yet they did not know where he was, nor did inquire after him, but contented themselves with a form of knowledge and worship). And they that handled the law, knew not him who gave the law, and was the sole true interpreter of the law; but the pastors transgressed against him, and the prophets prophesied by another spirit, Jer. ii. 8. They were wise, and did abound in their own meanings, guessings, and gathered knowledge; but they knew not the truth, no not of the letter according to the law, and according to that light which God sometimes caused to shine among them from his prophets. Hence it was that that people, with their rulers, their teachers. their priests, their prophets, were generally enemies to the prophets whom God raised up, hating, persecuting, imprisoning, stoning them, &c. The prophets of God (that spake his truth in his wisdom, in his life, in power, in the demonstration of his Spirit) they could not away with: these were fools with them; these were madmen with them, 2 Kings ix. 11. Jer. xxix. 26.; these were poor illiterate herdsmen and ploughmen: they had learned men, that were brought up at the schools of the prophets, that could prophesy divine things, sweet things, that could open the law learnedly: these prophets and these priests the rulers cherished, and the people loved, Jer. v. 31, and xxiii. 26, 27. Ezek. xiii. 3, &c.

Yea, among that people, such as had a taste of the truth, as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram might have (for surely it was not a small matter that could so lift them up to oppose Moses and Aaron in that manner, and to stand out the contest with them even in the Lord's presence, Numb. xvi. 18. but an apprehension of God's being on their side, from some appearance of his

his to them), and as Balaam had, whoſe eyes were opened to ſee the beauty of the tents of Jacob; yet theſe, through the prevalency of the fleſhly luſts and wiſdom, become enemies, and try always to prevail over Iſrael, even over the truth, and over the power. The apoſtle Jude compares ſuch to the angels that kept not their firſt eſtate. The angels that fell had a place and ſtanding once in the truth; but they kept it not (they abode not in the truth) but fell from it, and ſo became devils, enemies to the truth from which they fell: ſo thoſe that fall from the truth, from the power, from the living virtue whereof they once taſted, from the true wiſdom which once appeared to them, and began to ſeaſon and ſavour them, in their fallen wiſdom they become the greateſt enemies, the greateſt accuſers, the greateſt oppoſers, and the ſtiffeſt maintainers of a falſe image of that truth which they once had ſome knowledge of, and ſome unity with. Thus it was in the Jewiſh ſtate: now come to the apoſtles days.

Firſt, They had all the wiſe men of that age againſt them; all the wiſe Greeks, all the wiſe Jews, the learned men, the able diſputants of all ſorts. The Greeks could not find wiſdom in that knowledge of Chriſt which they held forth, nor the Jews could not find power in it, 1 Cor. i. 22. and ſo one accounted it fooliſhneſs, the other ſtumbled at it, ver. 23. There were many ſorts and ſects of wiſe men among the Jews; but not one ſort could own the truth, though they were looking for it, ſearching the ſcriptures about it, and diſputing concerning it. The very thing then in agitation and inquiry among them was, *when the kingdom of God ſhould come.* The king himſelf directs them where it was, that they might know where to expect and wait for it, Luke xvii. 21. and in many parables opens it to them; but it was ſtill hid from the eye of that wiſdom wherewith they did ſtrive to ſee, underſtand, and comprehend it. So that all the ſeveral ſorts of wiſe men of that age, even thoſe who were admirers of the law and the prophets, yet were

ſtrangers and enemies to the truth, becauſe they joined to that wiſdom, and to that learning and comprehenſion of the ſcriptures, out of the ſight whereof it came.

Secondly, For ſuch as did own Chriſt after the fleſh, ſuch as were convinced by his miracles (as Nicodemus and many of the honeſter ſort of the Jews were), yet Chriſt did not commit himſelf to them, John ii. 24. He knew this faith and this owning of him, which was founded upon the wiſdom and ingenuity of the creature, would fail; and ſo he would not own it in Nicodemus; but bids him look after the new-birth, John iii. 2, 3. Nor in ſuch as follow him up and down, upon this or any other fleſhly account; but ſometimes withdrew, and hid himſelf from them, Luke v. 16. John vi. 14, 15.; and ſometimes preached doctrines which ſtumbled them, and made them withdraw from him, John vi. 66. And ſo in the apoſtles days, there were many could get the form, and gain advantage thereby to the fleſhly wiſdom, to withſtand the power, 2 Tim. iii. 5. 2 Cor. xi. 13.

Thirdly, There were ſuch as had taſted of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come, and yet fell away, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. There were ſuch as denied the Lord that bought them, 2 Pet. ii. 1. Such as fell from the love of the truth to the love of their vomit, and of the mire of the world again, ver. 22. 2 Tim. iv. 10. Such as had a ſtanding in the church's heaven (like the angels which fell) but kept not their habitation, but were ſwept down from thence to the earth by the dragon's tail. Rev. xii. 4. theſe are the nobleſt champions (in the earthly wiſdom, and for a corrupted eſtate and falſe image) of all the reſt.

Now as the prophets of God among the Jews had theſe enemies, and as the apoſtles alſo had theſe enemies, ſo all along the apoſtaſy theſe enemies have been rife. The witneſſes have a wiſe ſort of direct oppoſers among the Papiſts, a wiſe ſort of ſecret underminers among the Proteſtants, and alſo another wiſe

wiſe ſort of ſuch among themſelves as had ſome taſte of the truth, but departed from the power of it into the earthly wiſdom, into the earthly underſtanding; and this laſt ſort fight more furiouſly and more vehemently againſt the truth, and are more ſubtle to aſſault it, and grapple with it, than the other two. Oh! there is no ſuch bitter deadly enemy to Chriſt and his Truth, as he who once had ſome taſte of the virtue of it, and is now turned from it into the earth, into the wiſdom and love of the world, and yet ſtill holds ſome of the notion of that truth (whereof he once felt the power) in the earthly part.

To come yet cloſer. There is in every man (not thoroughly ſanctified) that wiſdom which is not of God; that wiſdom from which God hides his precious truths; which wiſdom lies ready to catch every diſcovery and revelation of truth to him, that it might improve it, and grow rich and wiſe by it. Now this wiſdom cannot attain to the knowledge of any of the things of God: neither can this wiſdom keep the true knowledge; but whatever this wiſdom catcheth, it preſently corrupts. The true wiſdom, the true light, the true knowledge of Chriſt, is like the manna in the wilderneſs; it daily comes down from heaven, and muſt daily be gathered freſh. The true light ſprings from the life; and it muſt be held in the life, in the veſſel which the life forms, in the new bottle, in the new underſtanding; not in the fleſhly part, nay, not in the natural part: for as the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 14. ſo neither can he retain them. The old ſtorehouſe, into which earthly things were gathered, muſt be burnt up, and not made a treaſury for the things of God; but the new underſtanding, which is given by him that is true, 1 John v. 20. which new-forms and preſerves, and is all in the natural. Sink out of the earthly part, and read me, that thou mayeſt be able to ſay within thyſelf, and concerning thyſelf, Where is the wiſe? Where is the Scribe? Where is the diſputer?

The

The wiſe part, the knowing part, the reaching part in every man, will be putting forth its hand to gather of the tree of life; but what hath it ever been able to gather? I know men may gather notions of any kind, of any ſect, of any ſort of profeſſion, of any appearance or diſpenſation; but who is able to come near the life, to touch the power, the truth, the everlaſting ſpring, or any ſtream or drop of water that iſſues from it? And he who hath a true touch or taſte thereof given him, can his wiſdom add to it? Nay, can he ſo much as retain it? David had a true ſenſe and experience of this, who cried out, "O continue thy "loving-kindneſs to them that know thee, and thy "righteouſneſs to the upright in heart." Indeed if he like not to retain the thing itſelf in his knowledge, he may improve the notion, and bend that to the temperature and diſpoſition of the earthly part in himſelf and others; but this is not truth, but a dead image, or a dead remembrance of what once was truly living. Oh! how doth the ſoul that is begotten of the divine breath, that is born of the living power and virtue, depend upon God for his continual breathings! There is nothing that hath ſo much from God, and yet nothing is ſo little able to live without him. If he withdraw from it, it preſently hangs down its head: nay, if he do but ſo much as hide his face, it is troubled; and all the fullneſs, which it immediately before had from God, is not able to keep up its life one moment; but it pants, and fails, and flags, and withers, until a new ſupply of refreſhment be adminiſtered to it. And he that knows this in any meaſure will not wonder at the diſtreſs and miſery of ſuch for want of God's preſence; and at their cryings out after the ſpring of their life (even as the hart brayeth after the water-brooks) though they ſhould have fulneſs of all outward things, yea, and alſo fulneſs of knowledge in things of religion, even concerning all conditions and eſtates. The thing that I wanted in my great miſery, it was not outward knowledge, it was not experience of God's mercy and goodneſs;

neſs; but this I wanted, the iſſuings forth of his freſh life, and livingly to know where to wait for it, and livingly to know it when it appeared: for it was ſtill near me all the time of my darkneſs, and did preſerve me, and appear unto me; but I livingly knew it not, but thought I would be wiſer than others: for I ſaw many deceived, and ſo I would not own it in ſuch a way as it then appeared in me, leſt I alſo ſhould be deceived like others; but waited for ſuch an appearance as could not be queſtioned by the fleſhly wiſdom. And he that waits for that, and ſo deſpiſes the day of ſmall things, cannot but refuſe the little ſeed; and ſo, not being received into his earth, it can never grow up in him into a great tree; whereby the glory of the kingdom will be hid from him, and he ſhut out of it, when others enter into and ſit down in it. Therefore, *he that will be wiſe, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe*; let him receive that for his light, his king, his guide, which man's wiſdom never did, nor never will, own. He that ever looks to enjoy the Comforter, let him receive the Reprover, the Convincer of ſin, and wait for his law of judging him throughout the whole courſe of his ſinful ſtate and nature, paſſing along with him through the whole condemnation, until he arrive with him at the juſtification of the life, which the fleſhly wiſdom, nor any of his knowledge of the things of God (as they are held in the fleſhly part) muſt never arrive with him at.

Hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world? The wiſdom of this world is precious in the eye of the world; and the wiſdom of God in his poor, weak, deſpiſed earthen veſſels is ſtill fooliſhneſs with them; but the Lord ſo orders it, that he ſtill juſtifies his deſpiſed wiſdom in his deſpiſed veſſels, and makes the wiſdom of the world appear fooliſh to all the ſingle and upright-hearted, who thirſt after and wait for the revelation of his truth. Now two ways eſpecially the Lord makes the folly of this world's wiſdom appear.

Firſt, In that by all their wiſdom they cannot find out the true knowledge of God, ver. 21. "The world

" by wiſdom knew not God." Though there be an exceeding deſire kindled in them to know God; though they take all the ways that heart can imagine to attain their deſires; though they ſtudy and meditate ever ſo hard; though they get ever ſo many arts and languages; nay, though they read the very ſcriptures ever ſo diligently; though they *labour in the very fire*; yet what they get, what they gather, what they underſtand, what they comprehend by this wiſdom, it is all but " very vanity," Heb. ii. 13. It reaches not the immor- " tal, it nouriſhes not the immortal, it ſatisfies not the ſoul, it refreſhes not the ſeed; but only feeds and pleaſes the earthly part, the earthly underſtanding, the earthly mind, the earthly deſires and affections; even the man's part, the man's ſpirit, the man's nature; which, though elevated and raiſed ever ſo high, is ſtill but earth.

Secondly, In that all their wiſdom cannot teach them to come down to, to ſubmit to, to come into God's way of having their wiſdom crucified, and that raiſed up in them which might receive the truth. This they can never learn in the fleſhly wiſdom. They may indeed come thus far, even to ſee that there is no way of entrance but by death; and to ſeek death (that they may enter into the life), but they cannot find it. The ſeed of Jacob, in his ſeeking, miſſes not; but this ſeeker never finds; to this aſker it is never given, and to this knocker it is never opened: and that is it which makes this wiſdom in every appearance, in every ſort of profeſſion and ſect of profeſſors, ſo rage at the ſeed of Jacob, even becauſe it finds itſelf ſtill ſhut out of the life, into which an entrance is adminiſtered to the ſeed. And how can that which would fain have the kingdom, but rage againſt that which takes the inheritance from it? How can every ſort of profeſſors but ſtrive to ſlay the heir, that the inheritance may be theirs? Were it not for the living ſeed, and the living power and virtue, which breaks forth in them and among them, the religion and worſhip of the firſt birth might paſs for current; but this

this is it which darkens the glory of all profeſſions and profeſſors upon the earth, even that living thing which God hath begotten in his people, and his living preſence with it, and bleſſing upon it. At this all the zealous ſacrificers, teachers, and profeſſors, out of the life, rage and are mad, and would break the cords and bands wherewith this ſtrives to bind them unto God's altar.

Now look over all ages; Could the wiſe heathens ſtoop to God's diſpenſation to the Jews? Was it not fooliſhneſs and abomination to them? Or could the wiſe Jews ſtoop to the law within, to the word in the heart (although directed thereto by Moſes, Deut. xxx. 14.) to learn there to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God? Mic. vi. 8. Could they wait there to have their hearts circumciſed by that word of power, and ſo to be waſhed and made clean? Nay, were they not drowned in the outward ſacrifices, temple, incenſe, new-moons and ſabbaths, and ſuch kind of obſervations, and could not hear the truth of the Lord as it was delivered by Moſes, nor as it was opened by the prophets, Iſa. i. 11. So that this people, ſeeking to know the Lord from the letter by this wiſdom, could never come to the knowledge of him; but the place of his light and wiſdom was hid from them.

Again, when Chriſt came, and the kingdom was preached, and the everlaſting way of redemption and ſalvation made manifeſt, could the wiſe eye in the Greeks, or the wiſe eye in the Jews, ſee it? Did not the Greeks ſhut themſelves out by a wiſdom above the letter (as they thought), and the Jews by a knowledge and wiſdom which they had gathered out of the letter? How wiſe were they from the letter to reaſon againſt the king of life? *This man cannot be of God, for he is a breaker of his ſabbaths. He is a Nazarite, and can any good thing come out of Nazareth? He ſaith the Son of Man muſt be lifted up; but we read that Chriſt abideth for ever. He is againſt God's temple, againſt God's day of worſhip, gives his diſciples ſuch ſcope*

and liberty, as neither the Phariſees nor John gave their diſciples; but reviles our ſtrict and godly teachers and expounders of the law, calling them hypocrites, blind guides, &c. And mark with what a rough ſevere ſpirit he reproves them; whereas they call him maſter, and ſpeak mildly and gently to him. Oh! what Jew in that nature, in that wiſdom, in that ſpirit, could but find matter and occaſion of ſtumbling at Chriſt, even from the law and the prophets!

And as they ſtumbled at the true Chriſt, ſo have all the generations of wiſe men ſince the apoſtaſy, all the learned men generally (their councils, ſynods, convocations, and aſſemblies) ſtumbled at the true church, looking for ſome ſuch-like building as had been in the apoſtles days, and not underſtanding or obſerving how the Lord took down that building (as it had been ſet up in the world), and how he prepared a place in the wilderneſs for his true church, unto which he gave her wings to fly, Rev. xii. And how afterwards the falſe woman, or falſe church, got up in her ſtead, who with a golden cup of fornication bewitched the kings and inhabiters of the earth, Rev. xvii. 2. even peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, ver. 15.) ſo that they miſtook her for the true church, and went into her bed of whoredoms. Which of all the learned men, which of all the councils of the Papiſts, have ſeen this? Nay, which of the Proteſtant councils, or convocations, or aſſemblies, have beheld the ſtate of the true church? Nay, have not every ſort and ſect of the Proteſtants endeavoured to build up ſome image or likeneſs of the true church; not ſo much as ſuſpecting that ſhe was fled into, and was to abide in the wilderneſs for a time, times, and half a time? Oh! what darkneſs hath covered the earth? Oh! how hath God befooled the wiſe men of every ſort! the wiſe men of every age! the wiſe Proteſtants, as well as the wiſe Papiſts! the wiſe Independents and Baptiſts, as well as the wiſe Epiſcopalians and Preſbyterians! and how blind and ſottiſh are nations, and peoples, that ſtill they think to find out the truth by having a ſynod, aſſembly,

assembly, or convocation of the wise men gathered together! Indeed they are fittest to rear up an image to please the earthly part of man, and the earthly powers and interests with; but truth never came in by that way, but the wise and learned have still been shut out from it, and have proved enemies to it. And whosoever comes out of the apostasy from the Spirit and from the truth, to the Spirit and truth again, shall find nothing so great an enemy as the wisdom in himself, and directions from the wisdom in others: for that which God leads is a simple, a weak babe, a child to the wisdom of the world; and he leads it in a path which is wholly out of the line of this world's wisdom and knowledge of the scriptures, as the path God chose in Christ's and the apostles days was out of the line of the Jews knowledge of the scriptures. Such is the recovery out of the apostasy: it is hid from all the fleshly-wise men of this age, even as the entrance into the truths of the kingdom was hid from all the fleshly-wise men of that age. Happy is he who ceaseth from striving after the knowledge and comprehending of the things of God in this world's spirit and wisdom, and waiteth in the humility and fear of the Lord, first to be made a fool, that afterwards he may be made wise unto everlasting life.

J. P.

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